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# THE GROWTH AND DECLINE OF THE FRENCH MONARCHY.

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BY

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To

MY DEAR FRIEND,

GEORGE COWAN,

FOR AULD LANG SYNE.

# PREFACE.

THIS volume has grown out of a desire to investigate the origins of the French Revolution. Many books have been written on that Revolution, and a goodly number deal directly or indirectly with its origins. Writers like M. Taine have generalised its causes with philosophical grasp and acuteness. They have unfolded the more direct of these causes by a study of "the old *régime*" in its later phases. M. Taine, in particular, has given us a graphic picture of the social and political institutions of France in the eighteenth century in his "Origines de la France Contemporaine." The roots of the Revolution lie, however, deeper down in the layers of French history; *below* as well as *in* the upper stratum of the eighteenth century. For its causes were indirect as well as direct, remote as well as immediate. To unfold this twofold category of causes, it is needful to go far back into the history of the old French monarchy, to review, in fact, the history of monarchic France from the Middle Ages onward. It is this that I have attempted to do in the following chapters, and in this endeavour I have eschewed the method of philosophical generalisation for that of consecutive historical investigation. I have adopted the historic method in a large sense in my search for an adequate explanation of the great upheaval which, in the last decade of the eighteenth century, affected the history not only of France, but of Europe, permanently as well as transiently.

Several questions suggested themselves to my mind on looking at the history of France from this point of view. How did the power of the French kings, from Hugh Capet onwards, grow? How did these kings exercise this power in the work of government? How, as the result of the exercise of this power, did the monarchy decline, and thus invite its own fall by the violent process of revolution? In seeking the answers to these questions, I became engrossed in my subject,

apart from its direct bearing on the Revolution. I studied it, in fact, for itself rather than for its ultimate effects. I found myself looking at each successive reign from the standpoint of its effects on its period rather than on the future, though I have emphasised the prospective tendency of events and institutions as I proceeded. In other words, I have made a study of government in France, under the old *régime*, in its relation to the nation for the time being. I have therefore entitled my book "The Growth and Decline of the French Monarchy." While, however, this title expresses more exactly the contents of the work, I have necessarily elucidated, in the course of it, the causes of the Revolution, both remote and immediate, and it is, therefore, an exposition of these causes, as well as an independent study of the growth and decline of a certain system of government.

I have not aimed at writing a disquisition on the institutions of monarchic France. It is of government in connection with contemporary history that I have treated—a very different, and, as I believe, a far more important subject. It is with the actual operation rather than with the mere form of institutions that I am concerned. It is a question of minor importance, in my view, whether, for instance, the Council of State was composed of so many individuals, or of so many subordinate councils, compared with the question whether its acts affected France, for the time being, for good or evil. The reader who is more interested in the form than in the substance of government, will find in other works—admirable works of their kind—ample information on such matters. He may turn, for example, to M. Gasquet's "Précis des Institutions Politiques et Sociales de l'Ancienne France."

I have attempted to portray the growth of the monarchy from the days of Hugh Capet onwards, until it reached its climax in the reign of Louis XIV. From the latter part of this reign to the end of that of Louis XV., I have treated of its decline. The process of decline continued into the reign of Louis XVI., but as this reign witnessed the fall of the monarchy, I have paused at the death of Louis XV. The subject of the fall of the monarchy would require a separate volume, since it would carry us into the history of the Revolution itself, and, besides, all the factors of decline were already in operation before 1774.

The growth of the monarchy was a process of evolution, but it was not an unbroken evolution. There came intervals of relapse, when that growth seemed blighted. It was a growth by stages. I have only given a rapid survey of the

stage co-equal with the Capetian dynasty, to which I have devoted an introductory chapter. During this period there were feudal reactions which challenged the policy of monarchic supremacy. Under the Valois and the earlier Bourbon kings there were democratic as well as feudal reactions. I have endeavoured to portray these more fully, on the principle that the interest of the subject increases as we approach more modern times, and for the additional reason that some of the constitutional contentions that have moulded modern political history already appear in the demands of these champions of democracy.

What, now, in general, are the subjects to which I have devoted the greatest share of attention in the course of my investigations? As I have said, my aim has been to show how, and with what effects, France was governed by its kings, more particularly of the Houses of Valois and Bourbon. Government is, therefore, the main theme, but it is government in a complex sense, government in the sense of the general administration of the State. Financial administration, foreign policy, the relations of Church and State, the administration of justice, the repression and the growth of opinion, the persecution and the vindication of religious conviction, the bearing of government on the various orders of the State, especially its bearing on the life and welfare of the people, political theories in their connection with the constitutional questions which agitated the minds of men for the time being, and centred around the assertion of, or the resistance to monarchic absolutism—such are the more important subjects reviewed in these chapters. The financial administration of the old *régime* is especially important, for it was the fiscal administration, or rather maladministration, of the French kings that contributed so largely to the undoing of the old French monarchy. Important, too, from this point of view, is its foreign policy, particularly of the kings of the Bourbon line, for the successes or disasters of French foreign policy had, besides their bearing on the territorial formation of the kingdom, a momentous bearing on the prosperity, or the misery of the nation. Most important of all is the effect of the exercise of the monarchic power on the people. The grand test of the value of any government is contained in the question, What did it do for the people? Did it contribute to its elevation, its welfare, its happiness, in the widest sense, or did it not? Practically every other question is subordinate to this, and I shall have entirely missed the mark if I have not made it clear, all through, whether the

government of the French monarchs served, not the aggrandisement of France or the grandeur of this or that individual who happened to wear the French crown, but the grand purpose of the general interest. There is a history behind history, the history of the humble millions, which historians have too much neglected in order to portray the artificial, spectacular history of courts and camps. This book is as much a succinct history of the French people as of the French kings, in as far at least as the effects of their government on the people were concerned. What is the testimony of this occult history for, or against the government? is the all-important question which this volume seeks to answer. It is from this standpoint that I have judged, for it is the touchstone of the statesmanship of "the old *régime*," and of the system which it represented. It is because many of the French kings practically, if not professedly, came to regard their office, not as a trust held for and from the people, but as an absolute right, inherent in royalty and devoid of responsibility to the people, that they governed France into the abyss, and proved their incompetence to govern at all.

In addition to copious references to authorities in the footnotes, I have appended to each chapter, with the exception of the Introduction, a list of these authorities which may serve the useful purpose of a bibliography of the subject. It does not profess to be exhaustive, for a list of even the original sources of the history of mediæval and modern France would of itself fill a respectable volume. I may say that, while limiting myself to the study of the sources relative to my subject, I have, at all events, sought most of my material from the great collections of contemporary evidence, bearing on the administration of the various reigns. For particulars, I must direct the reader to the lists referred to.

THE UNIVERSITY,
ST ANDREWS, *March* 1902.

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# THE GROWTH AND DECLINE OF THE FRENCH MONARCHY.

## CHAPTER I.

### INTRODUCTION.

### THE MONARCHY UNDER THE CAPETIAN KINGS (987-1328).

AT the close of the tenth century, or, to be exact, in the year 987, Hugh Capet, Duke of France—a mere strip of territory extending from the Somme southwards to the Loire, and intersecting the Seine at Paris—became King of the West Franks, in virtue of his election by the magnates of Church and State. From considerations of expediency, these Frankish magnates transferred their allegiance from the dynasty of the Carolingians to the most eligible of their own number. Duke Hugh became king, not by hereditary, far less, divine right, but in virtue of the suffrages of his compeers, and of his own potency and prudence. "The throne," said Adalbéron, Archbishop of Rheims, in his address to the electoral assembly at Senlis, "is not acquired by hereditary right. We ought to elevate to this dignity only him who is distinguished, not merely by the nobility of his birth, but by the wisdom of his mind." An elective monarchy was not, however, suitable to the exigencies of the situation in this chaotic tenth century, and the dignity, likewise from reasons of expediency, became hereditary in his family, though the magnates were careful to maintain the principle of election on the occasion of the royal consecration. *This hereditary sovereignty was by no means absolute, nor was it meant to be effective against feudal autonomy. It was, in fact, merely that of an overlord, who embodied, rather than exercised, the supreme power in the State.* Each great vassal remained sovereign throughout his own wide domains. The great lords of Normandy, Champagne, Burgundy, Flanders, Vermandois, Brittany, Aquitaine, were for long but nominal vassals of royal Hugh and his successors, who bore the sceptre by their original permission. Feud and violence marked the powerlessness of

the royal edicts, the impotence of the feudal monarch. The provincial magnates and their vassals were alike refractory subjects, and held in as scant reverence the royal overlordship as they did their moral and religious obligations. Some of them respected "the truce of God"—the decree by which the Church strove to restrain the bellicose lawlessness of the age—as little as they did the decrees of their royal superior. The eleventh century is a century of pure anarchy in France, with most tragical results to the miserable people, who had no rights and seldom knew what happiness was. The chronicles of the time are grim reading indeed, with their oft-recurring story of famine driving men even to cannibalism, of pestilence, brutality, murder, crass superstition, and leaden, heartless oppression. For long monarchy was but a weak check on this state of things, chivalry a still weaker. The Church at least afforded some consolation and relief, if not an effective protection.

Instead of one kingdom ruled by a central authority, we see in mediæval France of this date, as elsewhere, a number of petty kings, each lording it over his great heritage, and intent on plundering his neighbouring potentate, when not oppressing his own vassals. Many a castle-crowned hill-top was but a robber garrison, carrying devastation and oppression far and wide. Against such forces what could the so-called King of France (King of Paris and adjacent lands rather, if even of that) accomplish? Little certainly, if that king were a man of the stamp of a Robert II. (996-1031), a Henry I. (1031-1060), a Philip I. (1060-1108), Hugh Capet's mediocre successors.

With Louis VI. (1108-1137), Louis "the corpulent," more appropriately "the wide-awake," "the battler," a new epoch begins. Louis was a forcible type of king, the real founder of the French monarchy. He put down lawlessness with a strong hand in his own domains, storming, foremost in the fight, the strongholds of his robber barons, with his own soldiery and the peasant bands of the Church lands, which Abbot Suger of St Denis—counsellor, friend, biographer—called to his aid. Right well did he earn the title of king by his effective rule. "Illustrious and courageous defender of the kingdom, he provided for the wants of the churches, and (what had been long neglected) watched over the interests of the husbandman, the labourer, the poor. . . . Yea, he strove, with a constant courage, on every favourable occasion that offered, to carry on with sagacity the administration of the kingdom, to put down rebellion, to seize and occupy the castles of the lawless."[1] The great lords, too,

[1] Suger, De Vita Ludovici Grossi, c. ii. and viii.; Guizot, Collection des Mémoires, tom. viii., pp. 8, 21.

ultimately came at his call to range their hosts under his banner in defence of the kingdom against Henry V. of Germany and Henry I. of England, or against some defiant magnate, like Duke William of Aquitaine. The south and the north alike felt the potency of this energetic "battler," whose sharp eye was keen to note his own interest, and his hand, in pursuing it, equally potent to serve the general interest. In Louis' hand, too, the sceptre was an emblem of real power as the instrument of justice. The king asserted himself as lawgiver, as judge. The kingship attained in his strong personality some recognition of its highest functions as the source of justice, the defence of the wronged. A most significant fact, to which royalty was to owe much of its future strength, and which, in such times, was the best justification of obedience. The doctrine and practice of hereditary monarchy, propped up by an ingenious and obsequious theology, invented for its advantage by courtly flatterers, will in the long run be hostile to freedom. In this anarchic feudal age, when liberty means anarchy—the right to do wrong with impunity—the rule of the strong man, whose interest happens to be that of the mass against the class, is the only condition of liberty with justice, which means some measure of order and prosperity, and is better far than liberty without justice, mother of anarchy and oppression. In so far as men learn to look to monarchy for protection and justice as against feudal oppression and wrong does monarchy earn the loyalty of the nation, which is made up, after all, mainly of the middle and the lower classes. It is as the representative of this high social verity that the sovereignty of a Louis VI. commends itself to these classes. "As he went," relates Abbot Suger of one of his journeys towards Melun, on the Seine, "a great multitude came together from castle, town, yea, from the plough-shafts in the field, to meet him, and implore Heaven's blessing on the king who had protected them and given them peace."[1]

It was at this time that the middle class began to emancipate itself from feudal subjection. While the peasant remained for centuries to come in serfish thraldom, the inhabitants of the towns were already being moved by the consciousness of human rights to seek the privilege of self-government. There is a breath of this spirit in the "Roman du Rou": "Are we not men as well as they? have we not the same members that they have? our courage is as great as theirs, and we suffer just as much as they." The enlightened persistence of the middle class secured what the Jacqueries—the peasant revolts—failed to attain. The democracy of the towns, with skill, money,

[1] Suger, De Vita Lud., c. xxi.; Guizot, Collection, tom. viii., pp. 155, 156.

intelligence to back it, made steady, if slow, headway, and to this democracy the monarch could effectively appeal in the struggle with feudal lawlessness. It would be inaccurate to assume a conscious policy of alliance between a Louis VI. and the middle class as against the higher orders. That class obtained municipal privileges from baron and bishop, as well as from king. Nay, the king was quite ready, in his own interest, to repress the subjects of some vassal, who offered the higher bribe to secure the royal intervention. The communes simply bought the right of municipal freedom from their overlords, and Louis VI., in his own domains, was hostile rather than friendly to this democratic movement. Significant, however, is the fact that in these communes, thus beginning to emancipate themselves from the feudal *régime*, there is a democratic spirit, inimical to feudal oppression, which future monarchs will know how to turn to account.[1]

The Church, too, of which Louis VI. was a devoted son, was the potent ally of the monarch who championed so effectively its rights and protected its churches and abbeys from the violence of sacrilegious barons. Abbot Suger, for example, brought to his service the powerful influence of a holy man, of able intellect and keen patriotism, in a superstitious age. To enlist in his cause the religious sentiment was to gain much, for in these chaotic times there was still some fear of God, and still more of the devil, to influence the heart. Indirectly, too, the Church by gaining the great lords to do battle in her cause against the infidel, and thus turning into the channel of mingled fanaticism and chivalry the wild energy of the age, considerably weakened the strength of feudalism. While feudal France, in response to the impassioned summons of Peter the Hermit and Pope Urban, thronged eastwards in the first crusade to free the Holy Sepulchre and waste itself in war, disease, and famine, its loss was so much gain to the royal power.

The reign of Louis VII. (1137-1180) was a retrogression from the energetic *régime* of his father, except during the short interval from 1147 to 1149 when Louis, in obedience to the call of St Bernard, took the cross and headed a second crusade, and Abbot Suger directed the government in his absence. By consenting, on his return, to divorce his queen, Eleanor, he lost Aquitaine and Poitou, the dowry she had brought to the French crown. Worse still, by her marriage to Henry II. of England these provinces passed to the English crown, and a fruitful source of strife between the two peoples, threat-

[1] See Thierry, Histoire du Tiers État; Michelet, Histoire de France, tom. i. 315-320.

ening at times the independence of France, was introduced into French history. Yet on his death Louis VII. left a considerable reputation to mark his long reign, particularly among the monks and the clergy, whom he delighted by his piety and his benefits to the Church. Such a feeble personality, which found the highest pleasure in the exercises of religion, was well fitted to become the hero of the monkish chronicler, and it is at least a relief to stumble on this kindly, contemplative nature, crowned monk, friend of the peaceful arts, who refused to draw the sword in persecution of the Jews in an age in which the sword of the crusader was the emblem of a martial creed, an intolerant fanaticism. Louis earned, too, the gratitude of the middle class by granting charters to a large number of cities, and thus contributing to the elevation of that element from which Crown and nation were to derive so much future strength.[1] The central authority came into closer touch with the more remote districts of the kingdom.[2] In other respects his reign is insignificant, and the French monarchy only gained when he made way for a successor of more kingly type in the person of his son Philip Augustus (1180-1223).

Philip's reign is that of a man of large schemes who succeeded in war and diplomacy, to a rare degree, in discomfiting his enemies, internal and foreign. His kingly ideal was Charlemagne, and in his strong personality, in his brilliant success, one feels a revival of the spirit of the great warrior and ruler. He triumphed over the Count of Flanders, the Duke of Burgundy, and Henry II. of England in his earlier years; later, over Richard Cœur-de-Lion and King John, over the Emperor Otho IV., over the Pope even, and that Pope the great Innocent III. To relate his exploits is foreign to our purpose. It is sufficient to note that the conquest of Vermandois, Normandy, Touraine, Anjou, Maine, Poitou, was the reward of his unswerving ambition, his indefatigable energy, his political sagacity. Under his strong rule, France first learned, in a measure, to recognise in itself a nation. The great exploit of his reign, the victory of Bouvines over King John's ally, the Emperor Otho IV. (27th July 1214), was a blow struck for the unity of France. The significance of this victory

[1] We find him, however, repressing the liberty of the communes when he deemed it his interest to do so, as at Orleans, where he put to death several popular leaders accused of undermining the royal authority. See Vie de Louis le Jeune, Guizot, Collection, tom. viii., p. 210. This Life has been incorrectly attributed to Suger. Louis was equally severe towards the townsmen of Sens, who had put to death Abbot Herbert, for his opposition to their communal rights (*ibid.*, pp. 214, 215).

[2] See Le Royaume de France, par M. Luchaire, in the Histoire Générale of Rambaud and Lavisse, ii. 364.

lies in the fact that the great lords, the knights, the *bourgeoisie*, arrayed under his banner, fought for a national end, and the victory was celebrated at Paris, in some sort, as a national triumph.[1] As the champion of the national unity against the Plantagenet Kings of England—the crowned vassals, whose power threatened to stifle the growth of a united and independent France—Philip II. brilliantly vindicated the utility as well as the force of the monarchy. "He was a very shrewd man," says his biographer, "prudent and courageous to a degree, great in action, illustrious, victorious. His reign was distinguished by numerous splendid triumphs, which marvellously increased the rights and prestige of the Frankish crown. He conquered and subdued by force of arms many illustrious princes, powerful by reason of their lands, their vassals, their arms, and their wealth, who violently attacked him and his kingdom."[2]

While his success in war tended to enhance the prestige of the Crown, he strove like his predecessors to increase its jurisdiction, by enfranchising a large number of towns and placing them under the royal protection. He encouraged their industry by the privileges which he conferred on the trade guilds and by the patronage accorded to foreign merchants. The strength of his royal position in virtue of his forcible, sagacious rule is evidenced by the fact that, unlike his predecessors, he could afford to dispense with the ceremony of crowning his successor during his own lifetime.[3]

His government was not all enlightenment, however. The bloody suppression of the Albigenses which, if he did not incite, he did not intervene to arrest, as he could with ease have done, is a startling reminder of the brutality of the age, even with so strong and sagacious a monarch on the throne of France. The Church had committed itself, under the inspiration of men like Innocent III. and Dominic, to the dark and fatal policy of persecution, and Philip, who cultivated the Church, like his predecessors, when self-interest did not come between, was not the man to espouse the cause of toleration and humanity. Philip, therefore, stood aloof, watching the opportunity that should bring the spoil of a horrible warfare to the crown of France. When at last he did intervene, it was to support Simon de Montfort, who had done homage to him for his bloody conquest.

[1] Vie de Philippe Auguste, par Guillaume le Breton, Guizot, Collection, tom. xi., p. 302. This is a continuation of the Vie by Rigord in the same volume of this Collection. Rigord and his continuator are the main authorities for this reign.

[2] Vie de Philippe Auguste, Guizot, Collection, tom. xi. 348, 349.

[3] See Luchaire, Royaume de France, in Histoire Générale, ii. 373.

Louis VIII., Philip's son, continued the crusade against Toulouse, —almost the only thing of note he attempted during his short reign (1223-1226), and even this was a failure. He was impolitic enough to initiate the baneful policy of creating appanages for his children out of the counties of Artois, Anjou, Maine, Poitou, and Auvergne, and thus sow the seeds of those rivalries and pretensions within the royal family so menacing to the royal power and the national unity. He merits mention chiefly as the father of his famous son, St Louis, one of the finest royal figures in history, whether of France or of the world. So energetic a reign as that of Philip Augustus could not fail to leave resentments behind, ready to burst forth at so favourable a conjuncture as the *début* of his boyish grandson. The new king was a mere child, whose mother, a foreign princess, Blanche of Castille, held for ten years the reins of government. Hence the baronial reaction to recover by force of arms the power which had gradually been embodied in the Crown. "Great was his need of God's help in his youth," Joinville, his biographer, tells us, "for his mother, who was of Spain, had neither relatives nor friends in the whole kingdom of France. And because the French barons saw the king a child, and the queen-mother a foreigner, they made the Count of Boulogne, the king's uncle, their chief, and regarded him as their lord. After the coronation of the king a number of them demanded large gifts of lands from the queen, and because she would in no wise comply, they assembled at Corbeil."[1] They made an attempt to intercept and seize the king and his mother, who were at Montlheri, but the citizens of Paris came out to the rescue, and escorted them safely to the capital with much demonstration of attachment. Many other towns followed the example of Paris in the conflict which Queen Blanche, able and vigorous regent, maintained for several years with feudal insubordination—to terminate for a while by the Peace of St Cormier (1231). The communal movement was bearing fruit as the ally of monarchy against feudal particularism, and St Louis, not without cause, proved a grateful foster-father of municipal emancipation, though the royal officials, in spite of the royal ordinances, are frequently found overruling municipal rights and privileges.

To the statesmanship of his mother, Louis likewise owed the retention of his power over the south of France. The Treaty of Meaux (1229), which stipulated the marriage of the daughter of Count Raymond to Louis' brother Alphonse, paved the way for the

[1] Joinville, Histoire de Saint Louis (edit. Wailly), pp. 49-51. For an account of this baronial reaction, see Joinville, pp. 49-65.

ultimate incorporation of Toulouse into the French kingdom. Success also crowned his own efforts to quell a second baronial combination headed by the Count de la Marche, supported by Henry III. of England. Henry was defeated at Taillebourg and Saintes (1242), and the coalition collapsed. The attempt of the Count of Toulouse to recover his independence was equally unsuccessful. At the same time the last remnant of the Albigenses was destroyed in its Pyrenean stronghold on Mont Segur, with terrible barbarity, and ecclesiastical as well as political unity vindicated. The age of even a St Louis is still the age of relentless and brutal persecution, and the kingship even in his hands is stained by the shedding of blood in the coercion of conscience. It is still associated, too, with the idea of war against the infidel as a religious duty. Louis buckled on the crusader's sword with all the enthusiasm of the preceding century. His resolution was welcomed neither by his mother nor by his subjects, for the idea of a holy war, which involved such sacrifice and yielded no return, was almost antiquated. In carrying it out, Louis was as unfortunate as his predecessors. Six years (1248-1254) of his best manhood were wasted and lost to France in the crazy pursuit.

Louis, as crusader, is a chivalrous but foolish figure; Louis, as ruler, especially in the latter half of his reign, is a truly ideal king. He strove to uproot abuses by wise legislation, such as the ordinance regulating the value of the coinage, and to inspire respect for the laws. His aim was to govern by justice and to substitute the rule of law for that of force. He intervened[1] to allay the feuds of quarrelling magnates, even when worldly prudence might have suggested the advantage of allowing these turbulent *seigneurs* to weaken themselves by contention. He suspended, and even in 1258 prohibited, the right of private warfare. To compel the great baron to resort to the king's justice, instead of his own good blade for a decision of his grievances, was practically to disarm a lawless order, which insisted on fighting its own battles apart from the justice or injustice of its quarrels. Though ultimately ineffective, as the new prohibitions of subsequent reigns prove, the bold measure shows the wisdom and the strength of St Louis' rule.

His love of peace led him to conclude a generous treaty with Henry III. of England, when he might have exacted ample advantages from his weak adversary. Instead of wresting from foreign domination every inch of French territory, in continuation of the policy of Philip Augustus, he left Henry in possession of Perigord,

[1] Joinville. pp. 459-461.

the Limousin, and several other territories, in return for his renunciation of all claim to the provinces in northern and central France already won from the English crown, and for homage for what remained (1258). To do justly is of more account in the eyes of this king, who was also an upright man, than to outwit or cheat an adversary by diplomatic cleverness. Against the pretensions of the clergy even, his sense of justice made him firm—no weak evidence of probity in so pious a ruler. He refused to homologate ecclesiastical sentences—excommunication and its consequences—until he had satisfied himself by revision of such judgments that they were just.[1] Even a prelate should not do wrong with immunity, the sanctity of his character and the high claims of his spiritual authority notwithstanding. As judge, the king is supreme in his dominions, and will not lend the secular arm to enforce a clerical sentence unless he has duly convinced himself that such sentence is merited. The king is indeed, in theory at least, absolute, holding his crown from God and in virtue of his own good sword. He is answerable neither to Pope nor Emperor for the exercise of his power. "The king," it is roundly asserted, in the *établissements* of St Louis, "holds only of God and of his sword." Nor will he submit to the maladministration of justice in the baronial courts, and compels proud baron as well as proud prelate to appear in his high court and answer for his delinquencies. To this end he abolished judicial combat, as the arbitration of force not of justice, and curtailed the feudal jurisdictions by placing many suits, hitherto disposed of in the baron's court, under the cognisance of the royal judges, and sanctioning, in other cases, the right of appeal to the king. The Parliament of Paris, as the supreme court was called, became the guardian of justice, not merely throughout the royal domains, which Louis largely increased by purchase or negotiation, but throughout France, for to the king's court the nation learned to look as the arbiter of right and wrong. Under St Louis that appeal was never made in vain. Corruption in the royal administration was precluded with the same jealous regard for right. Every bailiff, viscount, provost, mayor was required on oath to do justice to every man—without respect of persons, to the poor as well as the rich, to strangers as well as natives—under pain of punishment in goods and person. They were placed under the supervision of inquisitors or special commissioners deputed by the king to inquire into and report on their administration. They might accept no present of gold, silver, or other article except wine, fruit, bread to the value of ten

[1] Joinville, pp. 44, 45; cf. 449-457.

sous, or give gifts to their superiors or relatives.[1] Integrity was the passport to the royal service, anxiety for the good government of the kingdom, the chief mark of fitness for high place in the royal confidence. An all too rare qualification in the annals of many a French reign!

Here is the picture of St Louis in his capacity of judge, fulfilling the original vocation of king as servant of the people. "The king," says Joinville, "governed his kingdom well and faithfully, and according to God. He had his affairs so regulated that my Lord de Nesle and the good Count de Soissons and others of us who attended him, and had heard our masses, went to hear the cases in the chamber, now called the Court of Requests. And when he returned from church, he sent to call us, and sitting at the footend of his bed, whilst we sat round him, asked whether there was any business which we had not been able to decide without him. On being answered in the affirmative, he ordered the parties to be called, and asked them, 'Why do you not accept that which our people have offered you?' 'Because, sire, they offer too little.' 'You should have accepted,' he would reply, 'whatever they were agreed to give you.' Thus the holy man strove with all his might to put them in a right and reasonable way. Many a time in summer it happened that he went after mass to the wood of Vincennes and sat down under an oak tree, we being seated around him. And all those who had any affair on hand came to speak to him, without restraint by bailiff or other official. Then he himself asked, 'Is there any one here who has a suit?' Then those who had some suit to make rose. 'Peace, all of you,' said he, 'and your affairs will be decided one after the other.' Then he called my Lord Pierre de Fontanes (celebrated jurist), and my Lord Geoffroi de Vilette, and said to them, 'Settle this matter for me.' And when he perceived anything to amend in the words of those who spoke for him, or in the words of those who spoke for the other side, he himself corrected it. I have seen sometimes how in summer he appeared in the garden of Paris clad in a rough woollen shirt, a vest of linsey-woolsey without sleeves, a black silk mantle round his neck, very prick, without hood, and a hat with white peacock plumes on his head. And he had carpets spread out for us to sit on round him, and all those who had any business stood before him, and then he had the cases decided in the manner related above."[2]

Such a picture, drawn by Joinville, confidential friend, companion in arms, and Seneschal of Champagne, brings very near to us the man as he toiled, without affected pomp, in familiar simplicity, at the task

[1] Joinville, pp. 467-475. [2] *Ibid.*, pp. 41-43.

of governing his generation. The old world *naiveté* of the man and his ways exerts its charm on a world grown monotonous with convention and inflated mannerism. So, too, does the portrait of the royal character, drawn by the same hand. There is in St Louis much more than the superstitious religiosity of the age which in the seventh Louis so hugely delighted the monkish chronicler. There is much of this indeed, but it is associated with a sterling love of God and goodness, a sense of moral obligation, a striving after the ideal perfection of Christian character, which ripens into one of the noblest of personalities. "This holy man," says Joinville, "loved God with all his heart, and imitated Him in his works."[1] To be a man and even a king of his word, to speak the truth and never say ill of another, was one of his favourite maxims. Even towards the infidel he kept faith against the exhortations of his counsellors to break it.[2] His sobriety in speech, as in drink and diet, was such, that, continues his biographer in quaint fashion, "I never in all my life heard him speak ill of anybody, or so much as name the devil, which name (a thing by no means pleasing to God) is in such extensive use throughout the kingdom."[3] He was, nevertheless, the most social of men. He liked nothing better than an after-dinner chat in good company. "The best book," he would say, "is a free and easy conversation."[4] He had a horror of what the Church condemned as mortal sin. "Seneschal," said he to Joinville in the presence of some monks, "what is God?" "Sire, God is something so good that there can be nothing better." "Verily, well answered, for so is it written in the Book which I hold in my hand. Now, I ask you, which would you rather be, a leper, or be guilty of mortal sin?" Joinville, with a healthy reasonableness, maintained his preference for the latter alternative in spite of the presence of the monks. "You talk like a fool," said Louis after they had left, "for there is no leprosy so ugly as mortal sin, because the soul in mortal sin is like unto the devil." Such religiosity is doubtless morbid, and one's preference goes with Joinville. It appears too—and in this respect it is the age rather than the man that is to blame—in the harsh intolerance towards heretics that travestied the spirit of Christianity. "A layman, if he hears the Christian faith ill spoken of (the Catholic creed disputed), ought to plunge his sword into the belly of the heretic."[5] Truly every character has its discrepancies. But in Louis

[1] Joinville, p. 13. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 25.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 15. Joinville means of course swearing, for he does make Louis "name" the devil in a quotation below.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 451. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 37.

this religiosity is merely the weak side of an intensely virtuous soul which strives to realise its ideal in the life of love as well as in hatred of the mediæval devil. The love which he had towards his people appears in his words to his eldest son during a serious malady at Fontainebleau. "Dear son," said he, believing his end to be near, "I entreat you to seek the love of your people, for I would rather that a Scotsman came from Scotland to govern the people well and faithfully than that you should govern them ill."[1] This love comes touchingly out in his kindness to the poor. His hand was always ready to relieve poverty. His hospitality was indeed as generous towards the poor as the rich. The king nobly conceived his office who used so lavishly the revenue of his crown to alleviate the misery of human want and suffering. Every day a large number of poor and sick was fed at the palace. "Many a time," adds Joinville, "have I seen him distribute bread and give them to drink with his own hand."[2] The multitude of his charitable foundations—abbeys, hospitals, houses of mercy, particularly an asylum for the blind at Paris—attests the extent of the royal philanthropy. To the remonstrances of those who objected to the large expense incurred by his good works, he returned the beautiful answer, "I would far rather spend liberally in alms for the love of God than in pomp and the vainglory of this world." As the centuries elapsed, monarchy in France and elsewhere tended too often to separate itself by a false majesty—the majesty of show and arrogance—from the interests and the sufferings of the people. In St Louis we behold a nobler type of majesty—that of duty and humility—which contrasts strangely with the ponderous and pompous conventionality of later times.

The spirit of the man, the spirit of his government, is best revealed in the testament written on his deathbed, in the camp before the Castle of Tunis (he had foolishly ventured on a second crusade in 1270 from which he was to return no more), for the instruction of his son and successor, Philip. The testament is in truth an epitome of his own character and actions—a noble commentary on a noble life. If ever kingship proved its claim to the respect of men, it is the kingship mirrored forth in the beautiful dying testimony which, unlike so many similar productions, was the true expression of a lifelong retrospect. I cannot refrain from translating part of it: "Be kindly and compassionate towards the poor, the unfortunate, and the afflicted, and comfort and aid them as much as lies in your power, and uproot the evil. Be not covetous in respect of your people, and charge not your conscience with imposts and taxes, unless in virtue

[1] Joinville, p. 13. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 465; cf. p. 479.

of the greatest necessity. If you have any weight on your soul, tell it straightway to your confessor or to some prudent person who is not given to empty talk, for then you will bear the burden more easily. See that you choose as companions prudent and faithful men, whether cleric or laic, who are not filled with covetousness, and often take counsel with them. . . . Love that which is profitable and good; hate whatever is evil. Let none be ever so bold as to utter in your presence a word which seduces or excites to sin, or speak ill of others by underhand detractions. Suffer nothing vile to be said of God or of the saints in your presence. Render thanks unto God for all the benefits which He has bestowed on you, so that you may prove yourself worthy to receive more. Be loyal and firm to render justice and do right to your subjects, turning neither to the right hand nor to the left, but always towards rectitude, and sustain the complaint of the poor till the truth be declared. And if any one has a case against you, be not prejudiced against him, but seek to know the truth, for then your counsellors will judge without fear, according to the truth, whether for or against you. . . . You ought to take the greatest care that your servants and subjects live in peace and justice. Guard the customs and especially the good cities of your kingdom in the status and franchise in which your predecessors have conserved them. Keep them in your favour and affection, and if there is anything to amend, redress it. For in proportion to the strength and wealth of the great cities, your subjects and strangers as well, particularly your peers and barons, will fear to undertake anything against you. Honour and love all the servants of Holy Church, and have a care neither to take away nor to diminish the gifts and alms which your predecessors have granted. . . . Give the benefices of Holy Church to persons of good and pure life, and do so by the counsel of wise and honest men. Beware how you engage in war against a Christian prince, and if it is necessary to do so, spare Holy Church and those who have done you no wrong. If wars and contentions arise between your subjects, appease them as soon as possible. Be careful to have in your service good provosts and good bailiffs, and inquire frequently of those of your household how they conduct themselves, in order to learn whether they are guilty of covetousness, or falseness, or deception, or other vice. . . . See that the expenses of your household are moderate and reasonable."[1]

The king to whom this exhortation was addressed—Philip III. (1270-1285)—was ill fitted, both by nature and education, to be the successor of his great father. Strange that the son of St Louis

[1] Joinville, pp. 491-497.

should have been "quite illiterate," with such a father to watch over his education. The holy king, it would seem, was not much addicted to domesticity, though he kept his children at their religious exercises with the same painful exactness that characterised his own devotion. Joinville tells that on the arrival of the queen at Sayette (it was during the crusading time), after having given birth to a daughter at Joppa, Louis was engaged in his devotions and never budged to go out and welcome his spouse, but waited sermon as usual. "Never during a period of five years," adds his biographer, "did I hear him speak of the queen or of his little ones to me or to others, and it did seem unnatural to be so strange towards one's wife and children."[1] This glimpse at the relations of Louis as husband and paterfamilias is not edifying, unlike most of the glimpses of his private life, and helps to explain the singular phenomenon of a successor so unlike himself. Philip inherited only his father's piety, "being a good Catholic, given to works of penitence, to abstinence and fasting, mild and humble to all men, and leading the life of a monk rather than that of a knight." Neither his character nor his actions entitle him to the epithet of "Bold," "Hardy," by which he is known to the chronicler. He showed little ability or taste for the kingship, and his accession after so model a monarch affords another striking example of that strange alternation of strong and weak men on the throne observable in the history of the Capetian dynasty. What the strong man achieved, the weak man is in danger of undoing. This succession of mediæval kings in France displays the vices as well as the virtues of hereditary monarchy, which too often transmits power from a true ruler of men to a mere cypher. That monarchy survived at all under the shock of such an oscillation reveals the fact that men felt the need of it as a social cement in an age of anarchic forces. The rule of men like Louis VI., Philip Augustus, and Louis IX. vindicated itself by its utility. The kingship had, too, become a power which even the recurring incapacity of its holder could no longer discredit. Strong in the affection of the middle class, sufficiently strong, too, in the support of the growing legal class, to confront, even in the person of a Philip III., the restiveness of baronial pride, it takes with each successive reign deeper root in the national sentiment, root so deep that it will outlive centuries of stress and storm, till, having long outlived its pristine vigour and function, it fall amid the crash of accumulated abuse.

The fifteen years of Philip's insignificant kingship were signalised by one memorable event—the incorporation by inheritance, through

[1] Joinville, pp. 396-398.

the death of his uncle Alphonse and his spouse Jeanne de Raymond without heirs in 1271, of Toulouse with the French kingdom. A notable acquisition, including besides Toulouse proper, Querci, Rouergue, the marquisate of Provence (with the exception of the Venaissin ceded to the Pope), and several other districts, and fitted to invest the sceptre of Philip's strong son, Philip IV., "the Handsome" (1285-1314), with a potency that could cope with the many difficulties of the mission of making the kingship independent of the Church as well as supreme over feudalism. Philip's marriage with the heiress of Champagne still further increased the territorial expansion of the monarchy within the limits of modern France, if the failure of the late king's brother, Charles of Anjou, to maintain his claim to the throne of Sicily—extinguished in the bloody scene of the Sicilian Vespers—frustrated the attempt to establish French domination in Italy.

Philip's *régime* is that of an energetic monarchy based on legality. His counsellors were jurists—no longer sage ecclesiastical dignitaries like Suger of St Denis, but "Knights of the Law," like Peter Flotte, William de Nogaret, Plaisian, and the brothers Marigni. The influence of this class had been growing since the revival of the study of Roman jurisprudence, to which the impulse came from Bologna. Schools for the study of law had sprung up at Montpellier (incorporated into France by Philip), Angers, Orleans. The Pandects took precedence over the Canon Law, and the monarchy, backed by the Pandects and their exponents, rose supreme over the Church as well as the feudal system. The lawyers naturally became the allies of the monarch. It was their interest as well as that of the monarch to limit, if not to destroy, the feudal jurisdiction of prelate as well as baron. From the vantage ground secured under Louis IX. they continued with effect the policy of making the law supreme and themselves the potent ministers of a powerful monarchy. The Parliament of Paris, from whose membership the prelate was henceforth debarred, became the great engine of government.[1] It was an intricate machine as reorganised by Philip, but sufficiently effective as the instrument of centralised authority. There was the Grand Council, to which the cognisance of political matters was entrusted, and which now assumes a distinct administrative capacity. The financial administration was devolved on the Chamber of Accounts,[2]

[1] Ordonnances des Rois de France, i. 316.

[2] The Chamber of Accounts was not completely organised till the reign of Philip V. by an ordinance of date 1319. Before this date it was simply a Commission of the Parliament. See Martin, Histoire de France, iv. 539.

while that of justice was reserved to the Parliament strictly so-called with its three chambers—the Grand Chamber, the Chamber of Requests, and the Chamber of Inquests. The States-General, which Philip first called into existence as a national assembly, embracing the three orders of nobility, clergy, and Third Estate or middle class, was a mere temporary body, summoned in embarrassing circumstances to invest the Crown as against its opponents—Pope Boniface or the Templars—with the *éclat* and weight of a national deliverance. The Parliament, on the other hand, was permanent, and together with the agents of centralised authority in the provinces —bailiffs, seneschals, provosts, royal procurators, etc.—aggressively carried on the crusade of monarchy against feudal right and privilege. The crusade of the nations against the infidel is followed by the crusade of monarchy, based on legality, against every element of opposition in Church and State—against the Pope himself—to centralised authority.

There is much to be said for this augmentation of the power of the Crown, under legal auspices, in view of the evils of the age. In theory, at least, it is passably enlightened, in practice it is to some extent benevolent. Much of the legislation of these mediæval lawyers is laudable, though the motive may often not be above cavil, the interest of the monarch rather than that of the people being the main consideration. Hence its inconsistency, the absence of a philanthropic logic in the steady evolution of the principles of humanity and progress. We find, for instance, numerous ordinances restraining the outburst of inquisitorial fanaticism against Jews and heretics,[1] and confirming or augmenting the privileges of the towns, several against the oppressions of the royal officials, several more forbidding private warfare, one confining the judicial office to laymen alone, nay, one for the benefit of the serfs of Valois, proclaiming the natural right of every man to freedom.[2] On the other hand, there are many which can only be described as the vicious and oppressive expedients of an arbitrary and rapacious *régime*. It is not easy to make any system of government severely logical in the practice of well-doing, more particularly in the face of warring interests, and in the case of a monarch who is the patron of a class, and that class the law-makers of the age. A St Louis, in whom the practical ruler and the unselfish idealist are combined in a rare

[1] See, for example, Ordonnances des Rois de France, tom. i. 317, 346; tom. xii. 326, etc.

[2] "Toute créature humaine qui est formée à l'image de nostre Seigneur doit généralement estre franche par droit naturel" (Ordonnances des Rois, xii. 387).

degree, may come near the realisation of this ideal. A Philip IV., who is before all things a practical, selfish man, is no logical reformer of the humanitarian type. While it is easy to promulgate a system, it is not easy to change human nature, which in a selfish, despotic king is as selfish, as tyrannic, as in a selfish, despotic baron.

A powerful monarchy, served by a large official class, involves expense. Consequently the revenue of the Crown must be enlarged. Hence increased taxation—the *maltôte* and other grinding exactions, cursed by a suffering people,—and the introduction of that vicious financial system, so ruinous to France, the system of financial agents and farmers-general, in this case, Florentine bankers who recouped themselves for loans to royalty, or for the sum paid for the right to farm the taxes by the oppression of the miserable taxpayer. This form of oppression may be traced in terrible suffering and injustice all through French history down to the Revolution, which will one day exact a terrible retribution. Hence, too, the resort to a favourite expedient of French absolutism—the debasement of the coin, the arbitrary augmentation of its value, and other ruinous devices, "which cause the people to murmur loudly." Hence, too, revolts at Rouen in 1292, at Bordeaux in 1302, at Paris in 1306, in condemnation of the accursed *maltôte* (*mala tolta*), and other excesses of a grinding financial maladministration. At Paris the infuriated mob marched to the Temple to interview the king, and being unable to force an audience, tried to starve him out, and vented its rage on the house of the finance minister, Etienne Barbette. The ringleaders were hung up on trees and gibbets outside the town as a warning to a misguided populace.[1] It was rather for monarchy to take warning that there was something radically wrong with the logic of its legislation. Many such warnings will be given, and unheeded, till at last other heads than those of angry mob leaders—royal heads, it may be, in France and elsewhere—will pay the penalty of lawlessness—the lawlessness of misgovernment! At Rouen also the outburst of popular fury was directed against the tax-collectors and their masters, with the same tragic result,[2] the same ghastly testimony to the lieges. Towards the close of the reign, these revolts were no longer local and spasmodic. The spirit of disaffection penetrated the whole kingdom,[3] which was honeycombed with conspiracy against an

[1] Chronique de Guillaume de Nangis, edited by H. Gerard for the Société de l'Histoire de France, i. 355, 356. This chronicle and its continuation from 1301 by an unknown scribe is a valuable contemporary record of this reign.

[2] *Idem*, i. 282.

[3] See, for instance, Guillaume de Nangis (Continuator), i. 399 and 412.

oppressive *régime* in the name of law. In this rebellious reaction we discern the first of those leagues of the commonweal, in this instance headed by the venerable Sire de Joinville, which were destined to lend a dramatic and tragic interest to many a page in the history of monarchy in France.

Philip's diplomacy was directed by the same spirit of cunning and force which actuated so large a part of his internal administration. "This government," aptly judges M. Michelet,[1] "makes use alternately of ruse and violence. There is here in a single prince, as in the old romance, Master Renard and Master Isengrin." The two great ends of his foreign policy were the acquisition of Flanders and the absorption of Guienne. These ends are laudable enough from Philip's standpoint—the unity of all men of French speech, the aggrandisement of the French kingdom. They are, in truth, the logical continuation of the patriotic policy of the Capets. But the means employed for their realisation were detestable, though very clever, cleverness being the main thing in diplomacy now, as too often hereafter. Philip without scruple descended to the shifts of the sharper, who will overreach an opponent by every means in his power, foul as well as fair, and this rascally diplomacy even takes on a philanthropic mien on occasion. The Flemings are restive democrats eager to throw off the yoke of their tyrannic count, Guy de Dampierre. Flanders is a most tempting tit-bit for a greedy royal appetite, with its prosperous cities and wealthy burgesses. Philip, therefore, played the *rôle* of patron of these long-pursed, freedom-loving Flemings. Nay, he espoused the cause of the patriot Wallace and his perfervid Scots against the usurper Edward I., Edward being his vassal for Guienne,[2] and Philip being eager to rob him of his heritage. He much preferred this kind of chicanery, which cost much in the form of bribes, it is true, but did not involve the trouble of gathering armies. For Philip did not love camps or battles, and was more at home among his clever jurists, who were busy exercising their legal ingenuity in the art of outwitting an antagonist. But when it could not be done without drawing the sword, he was ready to fight. Guienne was ultimately invaded and conquered,[3] Flanders too, in spite of the alliance between Edward and Count Guy, who were forced to retire after the defeat of Furnes in 1297, before Philip's advance from Bruges to Ghent, and to sue for an armistice of two years' duration.[4] The conflict was renewed after the expiry of this term, with still more disastrous consequences to Count Guy, who

[1] Histoire de France, t. iii. 274. [2] G. de Nangis, Chronique, i. 282, 283.
[3] G. de Nangis, Chronique, *ibid. et seq.* [4] *Idem*, i. 299-302.

surrendered to the Count of Valois in 1300 on certain conditions, and was rewarded with incarceration in the Tower of the Louvre for his pains.[1] Very clever stroke, and a most advantageous one to Philip, who in the following year entered Flanders as the saviour of an oppressed people, and was splendidly feted in this capacity by the inhabitants of Bruges, Ghent, and other towns. Their illusion was short-lived. French conquest meant exaction, injustice, subjection worse than before, and in their exasperation the men of Bruges rose in 1302, and renewed the Sicilian Vespers on Flemish soil. Scarcely a Frenchman escaped massacre—an answer to Philip's hollow philanthropy which had at least the merit of grim honesty in it! The effort to avenge the treachery which treachery had invited was frustrated by the victory of Courtrai (1302), where the Flemish burghers stood firm behind a canal against the shock of French chivalry and hewed in pieces several thousands of proud cavaliers as they tumbled into the ditch on their front in unspeakable confusion.[2] It was a proud day for these stout burghers, who avenged the insolence and rapacity of their conquerors, and taught Philip the lesson that lying and hypocrisy are not always successful, even in politics. In Flanders, as in Scotland and Switzerland, monarchic oppression felt the strength of popular forces inspired by a cause, rooted, not in mere political calculation, but in the love of liberty and the sense of justice and right. Though Philip avenged the disaster at Mons-en-Pévèle two years later[3] (1304), he was fain to content himself with his feudal lordship of French Flanders. He was obliged, too, by reason of the great quarrel with Boniface, on which all his strength was now concentrated, to let go his hold on Guienne, to renounce his championship of the Scottish patriots, and to give his daughter Isabella in marriage to Edward's son, the Prince of Wales.

It was now the turn of the Pope to do battle with Philip and his legal advisers. Hitherto monarchy had allied itself with the Church and the Third Estate against the barons. St Louis had only tentatively asserted the right of the secular power to supreme jurisdiction, in things temporal, over the clergy as well as the feudal nobility. Philip IV. went further. He measured his strength in bitter conflict with Pope Boniface VIII. in vindication of the same principle. The day was past, now that monarchy had entrenched itself in the stronghold of legality and had the means to defend it, when the vicar of Christ could assert his pretension to overlordship over the sovereigns

[1] Guillaume de Nangis, i. 309, 310.
[2] *Idem*, i. 331, 332.
[3] *Idem*, i. 344, 345.

of the earth. The spirit of Gregory VII. was gone with the age that had recognised the vast powers of the papal tiara. In Boniface VIII. it was already but a survival, without root or growth.

The Pope and his antagonist were well matched in this memorable duel of the civil and the ecclesiastical sovereignty. Both were proud, stubborn, unscrupulous, ambitious potentates, and the conflict could only end in the overthrow of the one or the other. Tradition was on the side of the Pope, nationality on that of the king. Boniface might pose as the champion of the Church from the encroachment of the civil power, Philip as the defender of the State from the usurpation of a pretentious despotism. Philip, for whom the Pope had shown much goodwill, courted attack by requiring the clergy, like his brother potentate of England, to disgorge a portion of their wealth for the benefit of the State. Cleric as well as layman must bear his share of the *maltôte*, amounting latterly to a fiftieth part of his income![1] Boniface thundered forth the threat of anathema and excommunication (Bull Clericis Laicos, Aug. 1296). Still keener was the exasperation of His Holiness at the royal edict[2] prohibiting the export of gold, silver, and other articles of value, provisions, arms, horses, munitions of war. These rascally lawyers not only mulct the servants of the Church, they would even starve the Pope. Insensate and impious men who invade the realm of the spiritual and invite the curse of God and His saints, as written in the canons. Boniface did not deny the liability of the clergy to assist the king in his need, but the king must first obtain his permission (Bull Ineffabilis Amoris, Sept. 1296). The lawyers were, however, imperturbable, and stuck to their point that the monarch of France is independent in his own dominions. Boniface had too many enemies nearer home to deal with, particularly the Colonna faction at Rome, and Philip had his hands too full in Flanders and Guienne to drive things to extremities for the present. Each condescended a hypocritical explanation which did duty as a makeshift till circumstances allowed them to run full tilt, armed with Bull and Edict, at each other once more. In an unlucky moment, Boniface, deceived by the devotion that marked the jubilee year 1300 and sent innumerable crowds of pilgrims to Rome, mistook his strength and came forth with his challenge to obedience to "the vicar of Christ to whom all power is given in heaven and earth!" A modest man this Pope Boniface, with his papal sceptre striking the stars. Jupiter Tonans is among us once more, and his seat is no longer Olympus but the Seven Hills by the Tiber. And yet the earth does not tremble as he strikes, nor the stars stop in

[1] Guillaume de Nangis, i. 294. [2] Ordonnances des Rois, t. xi. 886.

their courses. Incorrigible, imperturbable Philip listened with stern calmness to the remonstrances of the papal legate, Bernard Saisset, Bishop of Pamiers, whom he arraigned on a charge of treason, and sent Peter Flotte to Rome to demand his degradation and his delivery to the secular power for punishment. Boniface held up his hands in horror. The civil power has dared to lay hands on a bishop! By the holy canons, this is sacrilege! Let mundane lawyers beware. "My power embraces both the spiritual and the temporal." "Maybe," imperturbable Peter Flotte replied, "but your power is *verbal*, that of the king is *real*."

Boniface could at least wield the power of assertion, and launched once more his paper bolt, weighted this time with all the omnipotence and terror that language could give it (Bull Ausculta Fili, Dec. 5th, 1301). "God has set us over the princes of the earth and their kingdoms, to root up, destroy, disperse, scatter, build, and plant in His name and by His doctrine. Persuade not yourself, therefore, that you have no superior, and that you are not subject to the head of the Church. He who so thinks is a madman; he that maintains this impious opinion an infidel." And therewith in the most imperial tone he rated the rebellious monarch and denounced the abuses of his adminstration.

Philip's reply was drastic. If tradition may be trusted, he had the Bull publicly burned at Paris (11th February 1302), while declaring that he held his crown by the fiat of no man living. The elective monarchy of the Capets has been transformed in the course of three centuries by royal ability and legal astuteness into the kingship of inherited right, the kingship by the grace of God. Philip even ventured to appeal to the nation to testify to the fact. For the first time a National Assembly, representing barons, clergy, and people, or Third Estate, gathered round the monarch as its supreme head in support of the dogma of the independence of the Crown from an alien usurpation. The sentiment of nationality, if not of loyalty, had become strong enough to justify Philip in venturing this appeal. There was indeed point enough in the accusations of maladministration levelled by Boniface to make Philip uneasy at the prospect of challenging the national opinion, but these inconvenient accusations were carefully suppressed and the points at issue limited to the question whether the king was subject to the Pope in temporal as well as spiritual things, or not? On the other hand, the abuses of papal interference furnished Peter Flotte with a fertile text for denunciation, and the deputies were sedulously wooed by the lawyers in the king's interest. The Assembly—barons and Third Estate in decisive terms,

the clergy less aggressively—disillusioned Boniface by declaring for the independence of the Crown. Moreover, the barons and the Third Estate would not listen to the proposal of a council at Rome, which Boniface had convened to abet his arrogant claims, and refused assent to the request of the clergy to be allowed to obey the summons. Public opinion was no longer so priest-ridden in the fourteenth century—the century that marks the early dawn of the Reformation—as in the twelfth, and Boniface, abashed for a moment by the decisive condemnation of priestly pretension, modified his claims to the extent of asserting the supremacy of his jurisdiction "in matters of sin" only. But matters of sin were capable of wide application by grasping ecclesiastics of the stamp of a Boniface, who informed his antagonist that if he did not amend his ways, he would have him chastised like a naughty child.

The defeat of Courtrai came handy as a judgment of God on an impious king and nation. Boniface took courage to hold his council, which was attended by forty-five French prelates in spite of the royal prohibition, and, on the strength of it, fulminated the Bull *Unam Sanctam* (18th November 1302). "The spiritual power," he contended anew, "has the right to institute and judge the temporal, but it is God alone who judges the sovereign spiritual power. Whoever resists this power resists the divine order." The bold declaration was followed by a sentence of excommunication against all who should restrain the communication of the faithful with Rome. Philip faltered, not from fear of the Pope, but from apprehension of revolt and invasion following the disaster at Courtrai. Boniface, presaging victory, would, however, have no accommodation short of submission, on pain of excommunication and deposition. He had forgotten that he too had his internal troubles which might afford a handle to Philip for his undoing. Why not join hands with the Colonnas, declare the Pope a heretic, a monster of vice, and an intruder into the heritage of St Peter? Had not Boniface intrigued to get Celestin V. to retire in his favour? Were there not scandalous stories enough, by no means creditable to the papal morality? As for heresy, it might be difficult to prove. No matter, it could be invented as were so many other expedients to suit the design of Philip and his jurists. Crime upon crime—true and false—was therefore heaped on the character of Boniface, until he stood in the pillory of legal ingenuity as a monster of sin, a wolf in sheep's clothing. But Philip's *régime* was not popular, though the States-General had taken his side against the Pope, and it was necessary to repent and profess reform for the future in order to blunt the edge of Boniface's reproaches and carry the

nation with him. Hence the edict for the reformation of the kingdom, promising redress of grievances, justice, and security to all. The bearer of the Bull of excommunication was cast into prison, the estates of the refractory prelates confiscated, and the Inquisition paralysed. Finally Philip appealed from the Pope and his Bulls to a general council, and despatched Nogaret to Italy to intimate his appeal.

Boniface repelled with disdain the enormities with which he was charged, and in his summer retirement at Anagni, drew up a final Bull of excommunication and deposition. On the 8th September 1303, it should be nailed to the door of the cathedral at Anagni. He had forgotten Colonna, and overlooked the intrigues which Nogaret was carrying on for his discomfiture. On the 7th the envoy of Philip and his ally—both implacable haters of the Pope—swept down on Anagni, burst into the papal palace, tore the Pope in full canonicals from his throne—Colonna, it is said, smiting him on the face with his mailed fist—and carried him on horseback, face to the tail, to prison, where he refused for ten days to touch food for fear of poison. The shock was more than his worn-out frame could bear, and though he was rescued by the people of Anagni and the neighbouring villages, and returned to Rome, he died about a month later amid terrible torments, if the stories of his enemies be true.[1]

His successor, Benedict XI., survived him but a few months, and in Clement V., Archbishop of Bordeaux, and domiciled at Avignon, Philip found a pliable creature who suborned the papacy to the monarchy with the servility of a client towards his patron.[2]

The Pope torn down from his pedestal of supreme domination, it was a small matter to lay violent hands on an ecclesiastical order (Flanders being out of the question as a golden milch cow), fallen far from the purity and chivalry of the early crusading days, now without a vocation, degenerate by reason of immoderate wealth and no work, offering, in short, a tempting bait to an impecunious monarch, who had learned too well the absolutist maxims of his jurists. Horrible stories were circulated of the enormities of the Knights Templars—*stories meant to prepare the way for their suppression and the confiscation of their wealth.* Their trial[3] is a tangled

[1] For this memorable struggle between the temporal and spiritual power, see Dupuy, Preuvres de l'Histoire du Differend d'entre le Pape Boniface VIII. et Philippe le Bel; Michelet, Histoire de France, iii. 282-327; Martin. Histoire de France, iv. 409-453.

[2] Guillaume de Nangis (Continuator), i. 349 *et seq.*

[3] Dupuy, Procès des Templiers.

skein of exaggerations and contradictions, from which it is impossible to extract the truth. Sufficient to note that monarchy backed by the States-General, assembled at Tours in 1308, and by a council at Vienne in 1312, was strong enough to coerce the miserable Pope of its creation into acquiescence in their destruction, and unprincipled enough to make use of the most barbarous expedients to secure its purpose of confiscation and robbery.

The disorders amid which this drastic reign was extinguished remind us how weak absolute monarchy is as a system of government, the moment the strong hand that creates it vanishes. But its utility appears even in its weakness. Under Louis X., eldest son and successor of Philip, feudal anarchy once more raised its hand in resistance to the intrusion of the royal power into the preserve of its privileges. There remained, indeed, a strong man who might have stemmed the reactionary tide, and he the redoubtable Enguerrand Marigni, Philip's right hand man in his latter years, his "*maire du Palais*," as the Continuator of William de Nangis calls him, his staunchest abettor in the struggle with the Pope and the Templars. But Louis was not potent enough to protect him from the hatred of Charles of Valois, the leader of the baronial reaction. The lawyer must be sacrificed if the baron was to regain supreme sway in his own domains. Accordingly, Marigni was tortured, condemned unheard, and hanged on a charge of sorcery—a favourite pretext of the time for getting rid of an opponent.[1] The feudal baron might for a time snap his fingers at the royal edicts, wage private warfare, issue his own coin, false coin too (following Philip's example), and challenge his enemy to judicial combat. In such factiousness passed the two years' reign (1314-1316) of Louis le Hutin, Headstrong (poor distinction, without significance). The only really memorable event in it is the work of the lawyers, and the fact is significant that the lawyer was not dead though the body of Marigni was mouldering on the wall of Montfaucon. This is the important ordinance[2] by which Louis extended the emancipation of the serfs, commenced by Philip in the case of the County of Valois, to the royal domains. "By the law of nature every human being ought to be born free." Evidently these lawyers meant well at times, and sought to ally royalty with the people. Their policy is humanitarian, whether actuated by humanitarian motives or not, and in thus proclaiming the fundamental principles of human right, they were the forerunners of the enlightened thinkers and reformers of the future. Of practical value in the meantime this deliverance had little, for this boon was

[1] Chronique de Nangis, i. pp. 416-418. [2] Ordonnances des Rois, i. 583.

no free gift. It could only be purchased, and the miserable serfs were too poor or too cautious to venture the risk of purchasing their freedom.

Louis left a daughter and a widow with child, and, meanwhile, his brother Philip acted as guardian and regent, with the approval of the barons. A son was born to Louis' queen, but died immediately, and Philip, arbitrarily applying the Salic Law to the succession to the French crown, set aside the claims of his little niece, Jeanne, and had himself forthwith crowned at Reims. He then convoked an assembly of the three orders at Paris, which confirmed his contention that no woman could succeed to the French throne [1]—a decision of far-reaching importance in French history, immediate and future. It bore in it the germ of the Hundred Years' War, and furnished a precedent for the transference of the crown from the House of Capet to that of Valois. It is strange that feudalism, which recognised the right of succession by a female to a fief in the absence of direct male heirs, should have denied the right of a woman to succeed to the crown. The crown, however, now stood far above the status of a feudal fief as a supreme and sacred office, independent, in theory at least, of Pope or people—an office, besides, not suited to the weaker sex in these troublous times. Yet, however exalted the theory of monarchy, Philip could not dispense with the consent of the States-General. The crown might be the gift of Heaven; it is none the less the people that gives it. The weaker sex, too, will have its revenge on these unchivalrous lawyers. If woman cannot formally rule in France, the mistress is none the less omnipotent.

In this decision the hand of the lawyer is again perceptible. Under Philip V., in truth, the Parliament regained most of its sway, and the baron once more receded before the jurist. It appears as the participator, the guardian of the exercise of the sovereignty, inasmuch as in the matter of the inalienability of the royal domains, for instance, the monarch undertook not to grant any gift or favour without the sanction of the Grand Council.[2] *If the Parliament is the champion, it is already striving to become what it will one day claim to be by right —the corrective of absolute power. While this edict postulates the divine origin of the kingship, Philip confesses, or rather is made to* confess by his legal counsellors, that God has ordained the power of kings not for their own profit, but for the purposes of good government. By-and-by the Parliament will go a step further and con-

[1] Continuator of Guillaume de Nangis, i. 434.

[2] Ordonnances des Rois, i. 656.

stitute itself the judge of what is good government and what is not.[1]

That the Parliament was again vigorously operative under Philip V. is shown by the following exemplary repression of feudal violence related by the chronicler. "Jourdan de Lille, a Gascon of very high birth, but most ignoble in his actions, was accused of a number of crimes of public repute, in the King's Court, for which he could in no wise justify himself, but by the interposition of the Pope, whose niece he had married, the king mercifully screened him from the eighteen accusations with which he was charged, each of which by the law of France merited death. Ungrateful for so great a benefit, he continued to accumulate crime upon crime, violating young women, committing homicide upon homicide, maintaining blackguards and murderers in his service, protecting bands of brigands, and revolting against the king. He killed with his own hand a royal official wearing the royal livery. On being summoned to Paris for trial in the year 1322 (some months after Philip's decease), he came accompanied by a pompous crowd of counts, nobles, and barons of Aquitaine. . . . After hearing his defence, he was first thrown into the Châtelet, and at length sentenced to death by the masters of the Parliament. The evening before the festival of the Trinity, he was dragged at the tail of several horses, and hung on a public scaffold, in condign punishment of his crimes."[2]

Philip's short reign was long enough to witness some strange things, significant of the low intellectual and moral standard of the age. We have almost reached the term of the Capetian dynasty (there is only another short reign of six years—that of Philip's brother, Charles IV.—to follow), and when we turn to the mass of the people for some vindication of its domination, it is a sad spectacle of general wretchedness that meets our gaze. During the long game of checkmate played by king, prelate, and noble, the people had been generally miserable. If mediæval monarchy had been a blessing, it had too often been to the mass a blessing in disguise. At its bar government can find but a poor apology. Poverty, ignorance, brutality, superstition, glare threateningly at the throne in the year 1320 from that vast multitude marshalled by a degraded priest and an apostate monk for some crackbrained enterprise—invasion of the Holy Land, was it?—that might ameliorate the

[1] Other tentative efforts at reform, such as a uniform coinage for the whole kingdom, and a uniform standard of weights and measures, are significant, though for the present fruitless (Cont. of G. de Nangis, ii. 37).

[2] Continuator of Guillaume de Nangis, ii. 46, 47.

wretched lot of the peasant. "Like a whirlwind," says the chronicler expressively, the force of popular wretchedness, seeking salvation in vague pilgrimage away from the haunts of daily misery, intensified by famine and bad seasons, burst forth. The peasant left his pigs and his cow by the thousand, for at such a moment even the veriest charlatan has a gospel that fascinates. Children, even, rushed away from their parents in this will-o'-the-wisp hunt of fortune under the auspices of two of the sorriest leaders that ever attempted to play the *role* of demagogue. Nothing could at first stem the tide of this popular fanaticism, which beat to death the royal officers who attempted to dam it back, within the prosaic reality of daily misery. These *Pastoureaux* attacked the prisons and liberated their comrades; swarmed next to Paris in their thousands, stormed the Châtelet, and tore in pieces the Provost of Paris, who ventured to defend it. The Châtelet fell as the Bastille will one day fall in similar circumstances, authority being now, as then, impotent to check the popular fury, seeking amelioration and atonement together. Authority remained quiescent even when challenged to set combat by the rebel host, marshalled in battle array on the Pré aux Çlercs, and breathed freely when the degraded priest and the apostate monk hied away with their pilgrim battalions southwards towards Aquitaine, where there were rich Jews and plenty of plunder to reward their zeal. Thither, therefore, they marched, emboldened by the cringing attitude of authority at Paris, to murder and plunder the Jews as they moved. One horrible tragedy among many reveals the terrible depth of brutality and fanaticism which darkens this twilight close of the Middle Ages. Somewhere in Aquitaine (the chronicler is not explicit), the savage horde lighted on a royal keep in which a number of terror-stricken Jews had sought refuge. The Jews, standing at bay behind those dark walls, defended themselves with the courage of despair, showering down upon their assailants beams, stones, and, God help them, even their very children when other missiles failed, until, the besiegers having set fire to one of the doors, the flames and smoke left no hope of resistance. Then commenced a horrible sacrifice—heroic in its way too,—for these doomed men and women preferred self-destruction to death at the hands of an uncircumcised rabble of Gentile savages, and charged the strongest of their number to perform the office of executioner. The executioner laboured at the grim task till he had despatched five hundred, and then desisted in order to go down and hold a parley with the besiegers. He recounted what he had done, and was base enough to offer to accept baptism for himself and the children who remained.

His words were answered by a shout of execration: "You have killed your countrymen, you would now escape death?" In an instant he was a mangled corpse, and the children, who would make good Catholics, alone escaped. Thence the savage horde, with whetted appetite, moved on to Carcassone, murdering, plundering, outraging in its pilgrim fervour, in spite of royal proclamations in protection of the Jews, the inhabitants abetting, if not actively, at least passively, the destruction of a hated race. Ultimately the Seneschal gathered a force sufficiently strong to scatter them to the winds, and hanged the fugitives "in scores and thirties, more or less," says the chronicler.[1]

This attack on the Jews was the work of a rabble, degraded and brutalised by ignorance and misery. But when we look higher, things are no better. The demons of superstition and fanaticism lurk under the robe of priest and lawyer as well as under the hodden grey of the peasant. Doctors of theology and law are as superstitious and ferocious as the crassest boor. Hatred of the Jew, envy of his prosperity and wealth, lend a helping hand to superstition. The culture of the Middle Ages is in this respect on a level with that of the African fetish worshipper. All at once the atmosphere vibrates with strange rumours of portents, compacts with the devil, and other idiotic fancies. Are not the Jews and the lepers in covenant with the Evil One to destroy all good Christian people? Every nose scents the hellish conspiracy. But let the chronicler himself tell the sinister sequel, the chronicler being a firm believer in the devil and the black art, and therefore fitted to tell the story with a naive seriousness impossible to the modern historian: "In the year of the Lord 1321 the King of France visited diligently the country of Poitou, which he held of his father by hereditary right. He had resolved, it is said, to remain a long time, when on the eve of the Feast of St John the Baptist the public rumour came to his ears that throughout the whole of Aquitaine the wells and the fountains had been, or would soon be, infected with poison by a large number of lepers! Many lepers, confessing their crime, had already been burned in Upper Aquitaine. Their design was, according to their own confession in the midst of the flames, by spreading everywhere this poison, to destroy all the Christians, or at least to make them lepers like themselves. They were eager to involve the whole of France and Germany in this terrible disaster. In solemn confirmation of the truth of these rumours, it is said that the Lord of Parthenay wrote about this time to the king a letter, signed with his blood, containing the avowals of one of the most considerable lepers whom he had seized on his estate. This

[1] Continuator of Guillaume de Nangis, ii. 25-28.

wretched creature had, it is said (the whole narrative, observe, is based on *on dits*), confessed that a rich Jew had seduced him to commit these crimes, giving him ten livres, and promising to furnish him with plenty of money for the purpose of corrupting the other lepers. When asked what these poisons were made of, he answered that they were composed of human blood and urine, and three herbs, the names of which he did not know or would not tell. They mixed with them the body of Christ, and when the whole lump was dry, bruised it to a powder. Then filling it in sacks, to which weights were attached, they threw it into the wells and the fountains. We ourselves have seen with our own eyes, in our native town in Poitou, a leper woman, who passing that place and fearing to be caught, threw behind her a bundle, which we forthwith carried before the magistrate. In this bundle were found the head of an adder, the legs of a toad, and some hairs resembling those of a woman's, infected with a jet-black and fœtid liquid, as abominable to behold as to smell. The whole was thrown into a huge fire lighted for the purpose, but would in nowise burn—manifest proof that it was one of the most violent of poisons. The king, on learning these facts and others of the same tenor, made a precipitate return into France (Paris), and commanded the lepers to be imprisoned all over the kingdom, pending the decision of justice as to their fate. . . . A royal edict declared that the guilty lepers should be given to the flames, and the remainder cooped up in the Lazarettos, and that if any leper woman was with child, she should be spared till after her delivery, and then thrown into the flames. The Jews were also burned in several provinces, particularly in Aquitaine. In the district of Tours, in one of the royal castles named Chinon, an immense ditch was dug, and a great fire having been lighted in it, a hundred and sixty Jews of both sexes were consumed in a single day! Many of them, both men and women, sprang into the ditch, singing songs as if invited to a marriage; nay, many widows threw their children into the fire with their own hands, for fear lest they should be baptized by the Christians. Those found guilty at Paris were burned, others condemned to perpetual banishment. The most wealthy were preserved until an account of their riches could be made up and confiscated to the royal treasury. The king, it is said, drew a revenue of 150,000 livres from this source."

"The following incident," continues our annalist, "is reported to have taken place at Vitry. About forty Jews had been imprisoned in the royal prison charged with this crime. Believing themselves to be near death, and desiring not to die by the hands of the uncircum-

cised, they resolved that one of their number should kill all the rest. They unanimously made choice of an old man, the most holy and upright of all, whom they called by the name of father, by reason of his age and his virtues. He would only consent on condition that they should assign a younger man as his assistant in this pious work, which being agreed to, these two killed all the rest without exception. When they had performed their task, they disputed who should kill the other. The younger wished the older to kill him, the older demanded the same service from the younger. At last the old man carried it, and obtained the favour of death by the hand of the younger. The young man, seeing himself alone, collected all the gold and silver on the dead bodies, and making a rope of parts of their clothing, attempted to lower himself to the bottom of the tower. But as the rope was too short he allowed himself to drop, and owing to the weight of the gold and silver broke his leg by the fall. Being caught and brought to trial, he confessed his crime, and was hanged along with the dead bodies of his companions." [1]

A sinister destiny seemed to pursue the children of Philip IV. The youngest, Charles IV. (V. to be accurate), who succeeded Philip V., was struck down by mortal illness in 1628, in the sixth year of his reign. Together, the reigns of the three brothers extended only over fourteen years, and in this rapid extinction of the direct male representatives of the House of Capet, contemporaries saw the fulfilment of the curse of Boniface on his relentless persecutor. Charles IV., like his brother Louis, left a widow—his third wife—big with child, and pending her delivery, the question arose, who was to be regent, and in case of the birth of a daughter, King of France? [2] The question interested England as well as France. By the deposition of Edward II., the year before, the English crown had passed to his son, Edward III., a boy of fourteen. Edward was the grandson of Philip IV., for his mother was Philip's daughter, Isabella. He was consequently the nearest male descendant of Philip, nearer than his nephew, Philip of Valois, son of Philip IV.'s brother, Charles. Should Edward or Philip, the grandson or the nephew, be entrusted with the regency, and ultimately with the throne, was the question for the assembled barons and the doctors of the canon and civil law to decide. Philip V., by an arbitrary application of the Salic Law, had secured their approval of the dictum that no female could inherit the crown. This pre-

[1] Continuator of Guillaume de Nangis, ii. 32-36.

[2] Froissart, Chroniques, ed. Lettenhove, ii. 212, 213, asserts that Charles IV. designated Philip of Valois as regent.

cedent excluded the claim of Isabella, as it had that of Jeanne, the daughter of Louis X. But did it necessarily exclude the claim of Isabella's son, the nearest male descendant of Philip IV.? If the mother might not succeed, the son might. So contended a large number of legal experts. In that case, however, the son of Jeanne, Charles of Evreux, might have a prior claim. At all events, the majority of the barons, apprehensive of the consequences to French nationality from the domination of a foreign sovereign, and having a predilection for the claims of a feudal magnate, and one of their own number, preferred the claim of the nephew, on the pretext that if Isabella could have no right to the succession, her son could not inherit any right either, and declared Philip of Valois regent. The birth of a daughter to the widow of Charles IV. shortly after (April 1328) opened the way to the throne itself. On the 29th May Philip was crowned at Reims.[1]

[1] For the discussion of this question, see Continuator of G. de Nangis, ii. 82-85; Les Chroniques de Jean de Froissart, ed. Lettenhove, ii. 20, 21, 213-215.

## CHAPTER II.

### Monarchy and Democracy in Conflict—Triumph of Monarchy under Charles V. (1328-1380).

PHILIP de Valois was well fitted, in some respects, to fill the *rôle* of king. He was a showy man who could pose in public and impress the lieges with his dignity in things external. He could rise to the occasion, as the representative of the grandeur of France, when the occasion demanded the dazzling display of royal pomp. He is "the magnificent king,"[1] who celebrated his coronation at Reims with a splendour far surpassing that which any living man remembered to have seen on such occasions. He was great in procession or on parade, and to his fondness for show, the picturesque Froissart was indebted for many a glowing description of that old world chivalry to which his enthusiasm has given all the reality and energy of a *tableau vivant*. Philip had, too, some ability as a soldier, as the first year of his reign was to prove, though he was no master of tactics like his great rival, Edward III. He was, however, a master of display, very formidable in showing himself at the head of a splendid host of gorgeous and fire-eating war-lords, and their no less gorgeous companies of knights and esquires, as at Buironfosse, Tournay, and Malestroit, and thus bringing his antagonist to retire, or to treat. To avoid a battle, especially against an antagonist of the stamp of an Edward III., was a greater merit than to fight one, which could probably only end in defeat, and Philip was to show over and over again that he understood how to cheat his antagonist out of a victory without exactly running away. Unfortunately for France and for himself, he did this once too seldom, and on the single occasion that he risked an encounter with Edward at Crecy, he suffered a crushing overthrow. As a diplomatist, too, he evinced no little cleverness in pursuing his interest, as in the acquisition of Montpellier and Dauphiné, which he won by intrigue and negotiation for France, or in checkmating his opponent. His astuteness in intriguing with Edward's allies,

[1] "Rex Magnificus" (Continuator of G. de Nangis, ii. 92; cf. 91).

and crossing his plans, as well as his resource in forming counter-combinations, does credit to his proficiency in that great art of fence usually denominated international politics. His relations with Scotland, as against England, would alone entitle him to whatever reputation belongs to an adept in that kind of diplomacy which consists in never telling the truth to an opponent, and sometimes not even to a friend, while always professing to do so. When we have admitted that Philip VI. was a master of display, understood when not to fight, if not how to fight—at least against Edward III.,—and showed much diplomatic cleverness, we have, I fear, exhausted his good qualities as king, unless we add that he was very devout, was a patron of the Inquisition,[1] contemplated going on crusade,[2] and was profuse in works of charity, at his accession at any rate, even to kissing the hands of the poor, and serving them himself with food.[3] He was no administrator, and administration being the first duty of a real ruler, Philip, like many others of his order, was essentially a usurper of the royal function; at best but a grand figurehead of State. The record of his reign is very largely the record of misgovernment and oppression, and if we judge of a reign from what it did, or rather did not do for the people, not from the shining performances of camps and the clever tricks of the cabinet, we shall only leave to Philip's kingship the crown and the sceptre. This is not much to leave, for it is cold comfort to the people to be told that this dazzling dignity is the embodiment of their own greatness, while the people has not sufficient to eat, and its happiness or misery is of so little account in that gorgeous but heartless society of courtiers and corrupt officials.

Philip being king by the election of the nobles, feudalism naturally expected to reap its reward. His *début* looked promising enough. One of the first memorable acts of his reign was to vindicate the rights of one of their order, Count Louis of Flanders, who held of the French crown for part of his dominions, against his democratic subjects of Cassel, Bruges, Ypres, and other Flemish cities. The expedition against Flanders was at the same time a vindication of monarchy against democracy, for there was a danger lest the contagion of Flemish revolt should spread to the communes of France and give trouble to both king and nobility at home.[4] The

[1] Isambert, Récueil Général des Anciennes Lois Françaises, iv. 364; cf. 366.

[2] G. de Nangis (Continuator), ii. 135.

[3] G. de Nangis, ii. 92.

[4] See Chronicon Comitum Flandriæ (Chroniques Belges), edited by Smet, i. 203; G. de Nangis, ii. 91.

battle of Cassel (23rd August 1328), which began with a surprise and only "by a miracle," according to Froissart, ended in a victory for the French[1] was both a crushing blow to rebellious Flemish democracy and an atonement for the disgrace of Courtrai. Philip, however, was evidently not minded to be the patron of feudal oppression and misgovernment. "Count," said he, after the battle, "I have come here at your request, and perhaps because you have been negligent in doing justice. I have come with great expense and toil to myself and my barons. Behold, I restore to you your whole land subject and peaceful, and I ask no payment. But have a care lest I be compelled to return on account of your misgovernment, for if I come again for this reason, it will be to my profit and not to yours."[2] This sounded well, and if Philip's reign had been the reign of justice, his subjects would have had as much reason to applaud as they had to regret his election. Not only did he turn against Robert of Artois, to whose exertions he largely owed his crown, but he pursued him with implacable hatred in his Flemish and English exile. He did not observe even the forms of justice in his hasty proceedings against the Breton and Norman lords, whom he suspected of intriguing with Edward III., and whom he sent to the block without the pretence of a trial. He has tarnished his memory by such acts of vindictive despotism, acts of a hasty temperament, a weak nature, and there is little in his administration to redeem his character from the charge of cruelty and arbitrariness. He did indeed essay the reform[3] of the financial abuses rampant at his accession, and this too in conjunction with the States-General. At Paris in 1328,[4] and again in 1332 at Orleans,[5] Philip and the Estates put their hands to the task of improving the coinage from the debased state in which his predecessors had left it. That the evil was very real is shown by the frequent lamentations in the royal ordinances, but it is equally evident, from the same source, that the promises made to the Estates and the expedients adopted were of no practical effect in restoring it to the current value of the reign of St Louis.[6] He gave up Pierre de Remi, the fraudulent superintendent of the finances, to the vengeance of the Parliament, which sentenced him to be hanged on the gibbet he had con-

[1] G. de Nangis, ii. 96-100; Chroniques de Jean Froissart, ed. Lettenhove, ii. 127.

[2] *Ibid.*, ii. 101, 102.

[3] "La reformation des monoies est grandement necessaire, especialement en l'estat ou elles sont à present, dont nostre peuple est et a esté moult grandement grevez et domagiez" (Isambert, iv. 362).

[4] Isambert, iv. 404. [5] *Ibid.*, iv. 405. [6] *Ibid.*, iv. 404.

structed for his victims,[1] but he continued notwithstanding to make use of the expedient of altering the value of the coin, in order to increase the revenue, which had disorganised commerce and brought ruin to merchant and peasant alike under his predecessors. It was a dishonourable as well as a disastrous trick. The marc of silver being at the value of, say, 8 livres 5 sous, the king would decree a new issue. He would value the marc at 7 livres instead of 8.5, and thus gain by this dodge 1 livre 5 sous on every marc. This was downright cheating, and the cheat was increased by the secret addition of alloy in the process of coinage. He might restore the subsidies granted on the threatened outbreak of war with England in 1330, but not a sou was allowed to filter through the fingers of the corrupt gang of provincial officials into the hands of the taxpayer. He professed the doctrine of the dependence of the king on the goodwill of the Estates for the augmentation of the ordinary revenue from the royal domains. "The king," decreed he, in the presence of the Assembly of 1338, "should levy no extraordinary taxes on the people without the consent and permission of the three Estates of the realm, and to this he was obliged by his coronation oath." This was as explicit an admission of popular rights as anything that the English people had wrested from its kings. Yet the profession of dependence on the national will in the supreme matter of finance —the real motive power of the State—did not prevent Philip from resorting to the most oppressive and arbitrary expedients to raise money. He increased by his fiat the dues on articles of export, and thus arbitrarily interfered with commercial and industrial prosperity. He continued to levy the oppressive *gabelle*, or salt tax, in spite of the promise given in response to the protestations of the Estates, and erected the sale of salt into a royal monopoly.[2] This device intensified more than any other of his iniquitous financial expedients the anger and even the hatred of the people, whose very pottage had to pay tribute to the king. It furnished Edward with his gibe at the Salic Law (the Salt Law) at Philip's expense. Add the exactions which enriched a host of swindling officials—Jews and Italians many of them,—the forced loans for which the taxpayer had to pay, the oppressive *tailles*, in addition to the oppressive dues payable to the lord of the manor, and it is not strange that, to the people, Philip's government meant a system of robbery, ruinous to prosperity, subversive of good faith and loyalty. The honest, if desiccated chronicler, who sometimes interrupts his narrative of wars, portents, and ecclesiastical affairs, to throw a

[1] G. de Nangis, ii. 85. [2] Isambert, iv. 472-475.

furtive glance at the people, presents us with a sad spectacle of misery. "Very heavy exactions on the common people," notes he,[1] "and in this year (1340) the most awful confusions prevailed, which were not to the utility of the commonweal." The Continuator of Guillaume de Nangis is not a political economist, and contents himself with the explanation that these things were done, not by the Holy Spirit, but by an angel of Satan. Philip might with more cogency adduce the war in explanation and excuse of the heavy burden on the taxpayer, as Edward did in England. The war was at any rate no excuse for maladministration, corruption, bad faith, heartless oppression, which is the sum of Philip's financial government. Nay, it was an additional and claimant reason for a just, enlightened, and patriotic administration. It was a foolish policy to rest the claim to a people's patriotism in the hour of invasion on the vicious expedients of corruption. There was not much inducement to fight for a monarch whose government was a system of plunder, yet France fought for Philip with singular devotion, for Philip was after all the only hope of the national spirit. At this stage of incoherent national elements, the king was France.

His government is, indeed, a government of contradictions, as is equally evident from other measures in the statute-book. He may be credited with good intentions, at times at least, towards the people. Witness the attempt to guarantee an adequate supply of provisions at reasonable prices.[2] Unhappily he was no consistent or persistent reformer, being as hasty in intention as slow and remiss in execution, and the people profited nothing from his good intentions. Good measures were frustrated by bad ones, and by-and-by, under the pressure of war with England, taxes on provisions nullified the ordinances in favour of cheap and abundant food. Take another example. He promulgated a law against the exorbitant greed of the money-lenders—Italian and Jewish usurers,—which reduced the unrighteous obligations of their debtors by one-fourth.[3] But while protecting the purse and the property of the debtor from unscrupulous creditors, he did not protect them from corrupt officials, who, in fact, as often as not, left nothing for the creditor to take. The attempt to regulate the price and hours of labour shows solicitude for the interests of employers, and professes regard for the interests of the workmen as well.[4] It was intended to prevent an exorbitant wage, and put down combinations and other shifts to raise the price of labour. In

[1] Cont. of G. de Nangis, ii. 166.

[2] Isambert, iv. 368, Mandement of 16th April 1330. [3] *Ibid.*, iv. 377-380.

[4] See, for instance, Ordinance of 15th March 1330, Isambert, iv. 383, 384.

so doing, it failed to take account of the profits of unscrupulous employers, or assure the workman adequate means of protection, or, what is more important, put him in a position to look after his own interests, which were probably safer in his own hands than in those of a sovereign who had no notion of free labour and competition.

With the reign of Philip we enter on the first act of a tragedy of war, unparalleled in its duration and, perhaps, in its brutality and misery, in the history of a nation, maybe, in the history of the world. That war began in 1337; it ended only in 1453. It is not quite accurately known as the Hundred Years' War, for it extended over the appalling period of a hundred and sixteen years. Not that the struggle went on uninterruptedly for fully a century. In this sense, too, the phrase is inaccurate. It was happily interrupted by truces and treaties of peace, and happily, too, it is a sheer impossibility to fight right on for one hundred and sixteen years. Even the most fiery and bloodthirsty of Froissart's heroes, nay, even Hercules himself, would have been unequal to this superlative achievement in human pugnacity. Nature and necessity, if not religion and humanity, interpose their imperative veto between the brute and the human in man. Otherwise, the human race would have perished long since, under the operation of the brutish law of force in human affairs. Even the fighting fourteenth century has some sane intervals and comes back for a few years at a time, through sheer exhaustion and surcharge of "beautiful feats of arms," to the faint consciousness of its reason. The world might thank God in this fourteenth century that men are mortal. Their mortality saved it from complete despair, by giving it a brief breathing time occasionally, if only to fall to it worse than before. For this reason, if for no other, it was imperative to take a rest now and again. Alas, these short intervals of sanity did not serve to bring home to the fighting maniac of the age the fact of his madness, and so the aimless, senseless struggle went on from decade to decade until it actually filled up the history of eleven and a half of them. Assuredly a most awful fact in the history of human folly. From 1337 to 1453 France was the real purgatory, and Dante might have found in this purgatory a place for the punishment of his worst sinners. For, while the war was pastime to the fighting maniac, whom Froissart has idealised and immortalised, it was purgatory, yea, hell itself to the people. The people, at all events, had not lost its sanity, as far at least as the consciousness of suffering was concerned. Froissart's ranting notwithstanding, there was no chivalry, to the poor man in

France, in this barbarous, desolating conflict, in which all the brigands, titled as well as non-titled, in Western Europe took part, and the poor man was plundered, murdered, ruined by the brutal brigandage which assumed the pseudonym of chivalry. Froissart even cannnot help at times showing us the reverse side of the picture. And it is a terrible one indeed, which reveals the operation of the basest passions, of which the people is the miserable victim, and has few redeeming touches of true nobility (not that figment of heralds-at-arms, but pity and love of humanity). For one hundred years, more or less, with a few exceptional intervals, men in France lived and toiled with the constant fear of a violent death before their eyes, in the expectation that they might live to see their homes burned down, their crops pillaged, their women violated, their children murdered by a brutal soldiery, and themselves, with what gear and family might be spared, seeking refuge, like wild beasts, in holes of the earth, in woods, in marshes, with no hope but the hope in God, which also threatened to forsake them. This is the picture at its very worst, it is true, the picture of the country victimised by the brigand "companies," of whom Froissart and the other chroniclers have much to tell, but it is not rare, and it is an awful commentary on the moral condition of the time. And all this unspeakable misery for what? All this for a mere genealogical contention between the two individuals who are the crowned heads of England and France respectively. Edward Plantagenet believed that he had a better title on genealogical grounds to the crown of France than Philip de Valois. Philip, and what is of more importance, France, for the most part, believed, as we have seen, that his title was preferable in law, and vastly preferable from the point of view of nationality. Differences in foreign policy accentuated the friction. Philip's greed of Edward's French territory, Edward's greed of the territory of Philip's ally, David of Scotland, fanned the embers of strife into the gigantic conflagration of war, which devastated France and Scotland again and again, without realising the main object for which Edward fought, nay, finally lost him and his successors all their Continental possessions with the exception of a single town! Whoever was sane, Edward was mad. There was no reason in the policy of uniting England and France, or even England and Scotland, much less all three by brute force. There might be a faint chance of this policy succeeding in the case of Scotland (though even little Scotland had taught a greater Edward the futility of attempting it); there was not even a faint chance of success in the case of powerful France. Philip, too, was mad, though his madness was of another kind. There is something

to be said for his pugnative attitude, for to him, and to France, it proved to be largely a war of self-defence, and both interest and nationality made it his moral duty to fight in the defence of his rights, which involved the very existence of France. In this world of contention there is such a thing as a righteous war, and man may be the better for such a war, though it were to be wished that in a Christian world, nineteen centuries old, even righteous wars should become an ever rarer survival of the barbarous state of civilisation from which war sprang. Assuming that Philip practically fought for a righteous cause, though he was not guiltless in the matter of the origin of this most execrable war, was he too, nevertheless, not mad in his own way? To make war, while ruining the prosperity of France by misgovernment, was certainly not sane conduct. To invite disaster and frustrate, by his own oppressive administration, the decisive vindication of his rights, was not the procedure of a reasonable being. If Philip de Valois had not been a demented creature with a crown on his head, he would have saved France and himself from ruin by at least deserving success. That he fought without meriting success, shows that he was about as mad as Edward, nay, far madder in some respects, for Edward, at least, had ruled England well, had nursed its prosperity before resolving on his quixotic enterprise. And the most lamentable thing of all is that two mad kings could make the world dance to their music. It is a strange music to which humanity has at times performed the unaccountable gyrations of its history.

Strange as it may seem, the monarchic power in France came out of this mad struggle stronger than before. It might be thought that such an experience would have begotten an invincible impatience with the idea of monarchy in any shape. But monarchy had the good fortune to war at the expense of others and reap advantages out of others' loss. It knew how to continue its usurpation of rights over the nation—a usurpation not without some advantages, as well as disadvantages to the nation, in the then anarchic state of things. On the fields of Crecy, Poitiers, and Azincourt, one generation after another of the French nobility was mown away. It was the nobility, rather than the people, that paid the penalty on the battlefield. The substance of the people was devoured by the invader and the brigand; and fell enough was its suffering; it was the chivalry of France that fell a victim to the arrows of the English archers. French feudalism received its mortal stroke from the English yeomen; the French nobility sacrificed its power as a class to its *bravoure*. Thus, while the nobility lost, the king really gained,

as shall be apparent by-and-by when this grim century of carnage and devastation has given place to the century of the Renascence and the age of Louis XI., the age of the absolute king.

There were, indeed, as we shall see, several resolute attempts on the part of the people to improve its opportunity in the declension of both Crown and nobility, but these attempts were premature, and, in the condition of France, nugatory. The time to secure constitutional power is not the time when the State is in the abyss of invasion, defeat, anarchy. There were no elements of stability to lend the efforts of the reformers permanence. Reform may begin in agitation, may live in agitation, but it can only take root and flourish in peace. Popular reforms in the France of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were like blossoms in winter. What the sunshine of one day had prematurely brought forth was blasted by the frost of the next.[1]

King John, to whom the death of Philip in 1350 transferred the crown, was a second edition of his father. He was equally fond of pomp, equally prodigal of the people's substance, equally addicted to arbitrary and vindictive proceedings—as is shown by the tyrannic doom of the Count D'Eu in 1350, and of the Count of Harcourt and other magnates in 1356,—equally incapable as an administrator. Nay, the *régime* of favouritism and corruption changed for the worse with the change of king, and the tide of disaster continued to flow in even stronger flood, for John was not only signally defeated at Poitiers, as Philip had been at Crecy, but taken prisoner into the bargain. His captivity and the discontent which had accrued from his own and his father's government, added the miseries of revolution and civil war to the miseries of invasion and defeat. The suspension of the payment of the State creditors,[2] impositions on articles of consumption, concessions and exemptions from such to nobles and churchmen, frequent alterations of the coinage in order to give it a fictitious value, in virtue of the right of seigneury,[3] increase of export dues on wool and cloth, extraordinary grants by the States-General of 5,000,000 of livres (190,000 marcs d'argent) in 1355 for the maintenance of 30,000 men-at-arms, and of the capitation tax in 1356, were the steps to the culmination of revolution and civil war from 1356 to 1360, from the battle of Poitiers to the Treaty of Bretigny. It is hardly worth while to mention as a set-off various legislative measures,

[1] For the military history of the reigns of Philip VI., John, and Charles V., I may refer the reader to my "History of Edward III." (Longmans, 1900), a study based on contemporary authorities.

[2] Isambert, iv. 573, 658.

[3] Droit de Seigneuriage.

which were good enough in themselves if only they could have been effectively applied. It availed not that John explicitly recognised the right of the Estates,[1] general and provincial, to grant subsidies (*dons gratuits*), and promised administrative amendment, under the stress of military necessity. It availed not that he decreed the restriction of the abuses of the chase, which pressed so hardly on the peasant and ruined agriculture, and limited the evil of purveyance by abolishing the right of *saisine*. It availed not that he condemned to death the lord of Marans, found guilty of "concussions and arbitrary acts,"[2] and sought to counteract some of the baneful effects of tampering with the coinage by regulating the prices of labour and provisions.[3] Nor did it avail that the Estates even went the length of appointing its own commissioners (*élus*) to ensure the honest assessment and collection of its grant, and swore them to obey only their orders. It availed not that they limited the employment of their extraordinary grant to the purpose of the prosecution of the war, in other words, claimed the control of expenditure, claimed even the right to reassemble within the year, debarred the king and his ministers from arbitrarily changing their decision, and came within an ace of parliamentary government.[4] The democratic energy of these measures might have raised France out of the abyss of misgovernment and given it nerve and resource to face the foe, if democracy could only have infused brains and conscience into the king and his corrupt bureaucracy. The ordinance, of which these are the main clauses, might be, according to Lally Tollendal, "the grand charter of Frenchmen." Unfortunately King John of France was as weak and unreliable a monarch as King John of England, and Frenchmen had not as yet the English genius for effectively vindicating grand charters. So long as an incapable king could not learn how to govern, and the Estates had not learned how to govern for him, reforming measures, parliamentary as well as royal, were not worth the rolls they were written on. At all events, the disaster of Poitiers, which deprived the brainless John of the power of working

[1] Isambert, iv. 631, 633. [2] *Ibid.*, iv. 691 (1353). [3] *Ibid.*, iv. 700-705.

[4] *Ibid.*, iv, 734-765. The Estates did not, however, insist absolutely on the right of parliamentary government, for the royal ministers succeeded in inserting a clause, that if the war, for which the subsidy for one year was granted, should not have ceased within the year, they should provide an additional grant. If they failed to agree, the king was to be at liberty to adopt the usual expedients (operations on the coinage) without their co-operation or control. This concession was simply to invite their own impotence. There were at least three meetings of the Estates of Languedoil between 1350 and 1356, viz., in 1350, 1355, and 1356, all at Paris.

further mischief for some years to come, put an end to the illusory hope of reform by the co-operation of king and Estates. The Estates had now a chance of trying what their own unaided zeal could do in the matter.

The disaster of Poitiers strained the loyalty of both Paris and France to breaking point. Charles, Duke of Normandy, who assumed the office of lieutenant of his father, and six months later took the title of Regent, though destined, as Charles V., to stem the tide of English conquest, was too young to cope with the situation single-handed. His father's counsellors were not the men to stand in the breach, and there was nothing for it but to convoke the States-General —those of the north at Paris, those of the south at Toulouse. Without waiting for the mandate of the Estates, the men of Paris, led by Etienne Marcel, merchant draper and provost of the merchants, set about strengthening and enlarging the fortifications of the capital—the citadel of French royalty and nationality.[1] After the disgrace of Poitiers, which discredited the French noblesse, the Third Estate naturally sprang into prominence in the deliberations of the Assembly convened at Paris.[2] The feudal seigneur was a potent individual as long as he could fight, but having been beaten twice over so ignominiously by a handful of English yeomen, he had lost both prestige and influence. For the present he was practically of no account. France had need of other exponents of its misery than the haughty, degenerate, luxurious noblesse, who were incapable of defending it, while enjoying the burdensome privileges accruing from their station. There was a deeply rooted impatience in bourgeoisie and people at these onerous privileges which were so poorly repaid in national service, and a democratic reaction from the miserable misgovernment of the feudal monarchy was the result. Its leaders were Etienne Marcel and Robert Lecocq, Bishop of Laon. As in England, so in France, parliamentary control is the only antidote to arbitrary power wielded for selfish ends with such disastrous results. Since the king and his counsellors have failed to govern, and the nobles to defend the nation, the people must learn to govern and defend itself. Sound reasoning, doubtless, if only the people were equal to the undertaking, which in this anarchic, war-convulsed age it unfortunately is not. The experiment shall be made at any rate, and even revolution is preferable to the intolerable evils of the Valois *régime*.

[1] Cont. of G. de Nangis, ii. 245, 246.

[2] It is a notable fact that in this Assembly, as in 1789, the deputies of the Third Estate equalled in number those of the clergy and nobility together. Out of a total of 800, 400 belonged to the Third Estate. See Isambert, Réc. Gen., iv. 772.

The States-General accordingly demanded the dismissal of the royal ministers,[1] and the establishment of a Council of State drawn from the three orders, and nominated by them (in this following the example of the English Parliament), the representatives of the Third Estate to predominate. These demands would have placed the control of the government in the hands of the middle class, which was already beginning, in France as in England, to divine its future mission as the controlling power in the State. Arbitrary power realised its master, and the duke prorogued the Assembly under pretext of consulting his father and his uncle, the Emperor Charles IV. He had recourse to the old expedient of tampering with the coinage in order to replenish the treasury. But government without reform was no longer possible. Marcel and the artisans of Paris were threatening insurrection, the provinces were being harried by bands of brigands, consisting of the fugitives from Poitiers and other lawless elements, who robbed, burned, violated, levied black-mail at will. The miserable peasant had to bear, in addition, the exactions of his seigneur, or lord of the manor, who sought to wring out of him the sum due as ransom to his English captors. Thousands of miserable fugitives crowded to Paris to aggravate the popular restiveness by tales of the horrors from which they had escaped. France, laments the chronicler, previously predominant among the nations of the earth in honour, wealth, and the arts of peace, was become an object of contempt and derision to other peoples.[2]

The duke yielded to the ultimatum of the reformers, and summoned the States-General once more (5th February 1357). They reiterated the demand for sweeping reforms, which were ultimately embodied in the Grand Ordinance of March 1357.[3] The chief abuses condemned and punishable by severe penalties—arbitrary taxation, vitiation of the coinage, maladministration of justice, fiscal corruption, and so forth—are familiar to us from the English Parliamentary history of the period. But if the English Parliament petitioned and protested in vain against such evils, the French States-General were not likely to achieve more satisfactory results, even with the committee of thirty-six reformers to carry the ordinance into effect. The ordinance, in fact, proved a dead letter. Parliamentary government is not the work of a day; it is the growth of tradition

[1] For the deliberations and resolutions of the Assembly see Isambert, iv. 771-795. For those of Languedoc, see 797-813.

[2] Cont. of G. de Nangis, ii. 245. The author depicts the state of the country in the most sombre colours.

[3] Ordonnances, iii. 121-146; Isambert, iv. 814-847.

and circumstance, and these indispensable elements were wanting in the France of 1357, when government of any kind except that of the brigand, professional or official, was at a discount. As yet France was indeed scarcely a nation—at best but a nation in patches, ready, it seemed, to fall asunder. What was wanted was patriotism to save it from disintegration. The reform movement was, indeed, patriotic, but it was wanting in experience—the indispensable factor in the making of constitutions. The French have a predilection for promulgating schemes of government on paper, which take little account of traditional and historical conditions, and all such attempts at wholesale reform have led to the abyss of anarchy, as Etienne Marcel will erelong discover to his cost. Moreover, no nation can safely venture on internal changes when its very existence is menaced by the foreign foe. If this world were only governed by ideas, and not by conflicting interests, the reformer would be the lawgiver and the millennium would have dawned. Till then he must often consent to be the martyr, and let utility, according to the needs of the age, work out the temporal salvation of man as best it may. A poor thing this utility may be, especially if it consist in bolstering up the throne of a miserable Valois king, whose government means suffering and misery to the people, and is utterly loathsome to men of the higher type; but for this wretched France of the fourteenth century that Valois monarchy is the only practicable hope of French nationality as against the English aggressor, and of some semblance of authority as against the lawless forces—feudal, brigand, or other—that threaten to engulf the miserable country in the chaos of anarchy. Well were it for the reforming patriot in such an age that he had never been born. All that he can do is to die for his faith, and be thankful if he can leave the prosaic world with conscience and creed untarnished by the low arts of the politician, whether of the court or of the street. Posterity may vindicate his memory, and such men must be content to outlive themselves. Happy those (and Marcel is one of them) who achieve this immortality.

The reforming commissions could make no headway with the task of transforming the country in accordance with the ordinance. King John, who relished this experiment in parliamentary government still less than his son, forbade[1] the payment of the subsidy decreed by the Estates, and though Marcel forced the duke to revoke[2] this prohibition, the taxpayer adduced the antagonism between monarch and Estates as a pretext for not paying. Paris and Marcel found themselves alone against France, which was as loth to pay for reform experi-

[1] Isambert, iv. 856. [2] *Ibid.*, iv. 857.

ments as for misgovernment. Marcel and Paris continued to improve the fortifications at least, in the grim hope of holding the citadel of reform against the gathering forces of reaction. There was, however, another expedient for holding the duke and his party of reaction in check, of which the bold tribune and his coadjutors, Lecocq and Jean de Pecquigny, now bethought themselves. Might not the captive King of Navarre, the popular martyr of royal despotism, who had been locked up these eighteen months in the Castle of Arleux in Artois, for his share in the murder of John's unworthy favourite, Charles de la Cerda, be brought upon the scene as a powerful ally of reform? On the night of the 8th November 1357, Pecquigny accordingly surprised the garrison, liberated Navarre, and carried him to Amiens; where the enthusiastic welcome of the citizens testified to his popularity. The welcome was still more enthusiastic at Paris, whither the duke was constrained to invite him. With so popular a prince of the blood as figurehead, the party of reform believed itself more than a match for the party of the Dauphin and the reaction. Navarre had all the prestige of a claimant to the throne itself, who had suffered for his antagonism to an unpopular *régime*. Moreover, he was a born orator, and on the day after his arrival harangued the Paris mob for several hours on end from a platform raised against the wall of the Abbey of St Germain, on a text of Scripture appropriate to the occasion. With such a princely and popular orator, who assumed the tone of the ill-used patriot, to lead the van, Marcel might hope to win the battle of reform. A formal reconciliation with the duke followed. Navarre obtained pardon for himself and his adherents, with the promise of the restoration of his confiscated lands and castles. On the 10th January 1358, a funeral procession wended its solemn way through the streets of Rouen to the cathedral. Three coffins enclosed the mouldering remains of the seigneurs whom John had ordered to be decapitated and suspended on a gibbet outside the walls two years before, for their reputed share in Navarre's treasonable doings. Behind them walked the King of Navarre, who delivered the funeral oration, and once more melted the multitude by his pathetic eloquence. Charles of Navarre was the man of the hour—whether for good or evil remained to be seen. Unfortunately the ceremony of reconciliation proved but a piece of hollow display. The wardens of Navarre's Norman castles refused to surrender them, and Navarre joined his brother Philip, who had continued in arms as chief of a band of brigands, in an attempt to force compliance. Civil war added its miseries to the horrors of the outrages of these brigand "companies"—English, Navarrese, and other—who under leaders like Robert Knolles

in Normandy, the Welshman Griffith between the Seine and the Loire, Philip of Navarre, and Arnaud de Cervoles, continued to ravage and pillage without stint. Navarre was evidently working for his own hand with the crown in prospect, and in the shock of rival interests the probability was that reform would be suffocated, and with it its patriotic exponents.

Meanwhile Paris was starving. The crowd of fugitives had to be fed, and the brigands who infested the country made it difficult to obtain sufficient supplies. Paris became querulous and restive in consequence. Why does not the duke, now regent, march against the brigands instead of loafing at his ease in the palace, and keeping a useless army of several thousand men living on the capital? Why does he continue to prefer the advice of evil men—the Marshals of Champagne and Normandy, for instance—to that of the honest provost of the merchants? Are honest men to starve because these scoundrels, instead of marching against the brigands, play the part of reactionary politicians to the undoing of the people? Clearly not. Down, therefore, with the scoundrels, and force the prince to do the people's bidding. Thus reasoned starving Paris, now as subsequently, when government has shown itself incapable of filling its stomach as well as reforming the country. Moreover, Marshal Clermont of Normandy (brother of him slain at Poitiers) has dragged from sanctuary and hanged a poor wretch who had stabbed to death the duke's treasurer, in resentment at his repeated refusal to pay for a couple of horses, sold to this functionary for behoof of his master. So, too, reasoned the tribune of the people, who, at the head of an armed band, burst into the palace on the 22nd February and demanded an interview with the regent. After a heated altercation, Marcel gave the signal. His followers rushed on the marshals and butchered them in the duke's presence. The advocate-general, Regnaud D'Acy, who escaped into the street, was pursued by the infuriated populace and beaten to death in a shop where he sought refuge. Charles himself trembled for his life, and abjectly supplicated Marcel to spare him. Marcel handed him the red and blue bonnet of the popular party in exchange for his own, and assured him of his protection.

In these cut-throat days it is rather superfluous to profess horror at the deed, especially in the palace of a Valois, whose father and grandfather had given precedents enough of murderous treachery. It was a crime, of course, in an age of crimes. It was, too, a tactical mistake. In lending himself to murder, as the instrument of mob vengeance, Marcel made compromise impossible, and saw himself

driven along the fatal path of the reformer who sinks to the level of the demagogue. He had made himself the object of the implacable hatred of the regent and the party of reaction, and every attempt at compromise could only be a makeshift till their enmity could bring about his destruction. He succeeded in arranging a second hollow reconciliation between the duke and Navarre, who now ventured back to Paris, and laboured to establish a confederation of the provincial cities in alliance with the capital. Amiens, Rouen, and several other towns donned the red and blue bonnet, as a mark of this alliance with the Parisian bourgeoisie. The regent, however, was only waiting the opportunity to shake off the yoke of the hated dictator, and managed to slip into a boat on the Seine, on the night of the 25th March, and escape to Meaux. He was now free to appeal to the provinces against the rebellious capital. He convoked the Estates of Champagne at Provins on the 9th April, when the nobles demanded the punishment of the murderers of the marshals. He next ventured an appeal to the States-General (of Languedoil), which met at Compiegne on the 4th May. The Assembly was but meagrely attended, and the nobles, who formed a large majority, again demanded instant vengeance on Marcel and his accomplices, and the proscription of the Bishop of Laon.[1] Lecocq fled to Paris, and his enemies drew up an indictment which imputed conspiracy and other enormities, suggested by their hatred, to the reforming bishop. A still graver menace to Paris was the seizure of the fortress of Meaux, which commanded the valleys of the Seine and the Marne, and consequently enabled the regent to still further diminish the food supply of the capital. Marcel strove to parry these tactics by energetic preparations for defence. He completed the fortifications, enrolled a popular army, negotiated an alliance with the brigand chief, Arnaud de Cervoles, the terror of Provence, and courted the King of Navarre more assiduously.

Fortune, at this juncture, opportunely promised to furnish him with a still more potent ally in the miserable peasants, whom oppression and suffering had goaded into insurrection. Unspeakably wretched was the lot of the French peasant in the fourteenth century. His existence was little better, nay, often worse, than that of a beast of burden. His lord oppressed, despoiled, tortured him at will

[1] For the ordonnance which the regent promulgated as the result of these deliberations, see Isambert, v. 5-25. The clauses referring to financial matters are the same as those resolved on by the Estates of 1355-56. In regard to administration they waived interference, and in this respect the reaction against the Parisian democracy is very apparent.

to support his dignity, pay his debts, cater to his vices. The oppression of centuries had degraded him almost to the level of the brute, who had borne extortion, torture, starvation, injustice with a truly bovine patience from generation to generation. It is a marvel how the mass of a nation could endure this long process of oppression by a privileged caste with hardly one gleam of consciousness that they too were men and equally entitled by nature to freedom and justice with the most bloated, debauched, and insolent aristocrat. Did they not worship in the same chapel and hear it proclaimed that God is no respecter of persons and of privilege? Yea, verily; but the spirit of the Christian religion was confined to the chapel. Outside there is apparently no God, there are no rights except for the haughty seigneur in the miserable fourteenth-century France as in other Christian countries. Traditional subordination, ignorance, stupidity made Jacques Bonhomme the patient animal that had endured for centuries the misgovernment of the king, and the far more grinding oppression of the local king, the lord of the manor, with only a very occasional suspicion that he had rights to defend or wrongs to avenge. But there is a point at which even the dullest brute in human guise will show his teeth and give free vent to the animal force within him. The human stomach, equally in serf as in seigneur, is at all events conscious of its rights. Jacques Bonhomme, if incapable of realising the fact of his moral and intellectual manhood, is conscious of the possession of a stomach, which will not be denied its right to one meal a day at least. But even this right was denied him in the miserable condition of things to which war, pillage, pestilence, famine had reduced France in this year 1358. The invader gone, the brigand took his place, burning his hut over his head, ravishing his wife and daughters, killing his children, carrying off the pinched animals, the bits of furniture, the bag of corn that his noble lord had left, driving him into the woods, or into the islands of the Seine or the Loire, or into some hastily dug earth dwelling, to die of hunger, or prolong the struggle with disease and starvation as best he might. Among these brigands were often to be seen the lords whom the fortune of war and the lawlessness of the time had converted into the knights-errant of brutality and greed, and whom he had learned to despise, as well as hate, since the disasters of Courtrai, Crecy, and Poitiers. "Why not kill these seigneurs, extirpate the whole race of *gentilhommes*, these cowards and traitors who will not protect us from the brigands, nay, have turned brigands themselves? So spoke one gaunt rustic whose eye burned with the fury of despair. "Truly said, truly said," answered the chorus of approving voices. "A curse

on him who would spare one of them alive."[1] To arms then—such arms as come to hand—bludgeons tipped with iron, knives, hatchets, plough socks, anything that will batter out the brains of a lord. Suddenly, towards the end of May, the country round Beauvais and Clermont on the Oise was startled by the appearance of a band of wild, haggard men thus armed, and generalled by a native of the village of Merlot, named Guillaume Calle or Karle, intent on the destruction of the chateaux and their hated owners. The patient, docile creature whom pillage and murder had driven into the woods, burst forth from his hiding place a wild beast—"like enraged dogs," says Froissart. It seemed as if the repressed fury of centuries had suddenly taken possession of him. Making for the nearest castle, the band burst open the door, killed the owner, killed too his wife and children, and burned the chateau to the ground. A more terrible fate was meted out to the inmates of a neighbouring manor-house, the owner of which was tied to a stake, his wife, who was *enceinte*, and his daughter violated before his eyes and then beaten to death, before the miserable husband and father was mangled by their clubs. Having once tasted blood, the appetite of the wild beast became even more savage and insatiable. Atrocity followed atrocity with terrible swiftness before the affrighted seigneurs were warned to escape the vengeance of these harpies by a timely flight. The ingenuity of hell itself was racked to invent new horrors more bestial than their predecessors. One unfortunate man, after being beaten to death, was stuck on a spit and roasted in the presence of his wife and children. After having sated their lust on the miserable spouse, these monsters forced her and her children to eat of the roasted seigneur, and finally put an end with their clubs to their unspeakable misery. The pen refuses to expatiate further on these orgies which had better been left in oblivion were it not necessary to give some notion thereby of the fearful moral collapse of this age of horrors. The contagion of this epidemic of hell spread from district to district all over the north of France from the Yonne to the Somme and beyond, where the country had been most harried by the brigands. In the stupor and consternation of the first weeks, there was no attempt at combination and resistance by the nobles, and the itinerant bands swelled to thousands in consequence. Jacques Bonhomme promised to do Marcel's work for him, to crush the party of reaction before it could lift a finger in self-defence. The dictator of the capital saw his advantage and entered into an alliance with Calle, the king of the Jacques, while striving to moderate the savage spirit of his followers. Detachments of Paris militia joined

[1] Froissart (Luce's edition), v. 99.

the insurgents, on condition, however, that the atrocities of the first few days of the rising should cease. One of these confederate bands of bourgeoisie and peasants laid siege to Meaux, which opened its gates. The fortress (the Marché), however, in which the Duchess of Orleans and over three hundred ladies of noble rank had sought refuge, held out long enough to enable Gaston, Count de Foix, and the Captal of Buch, who were returning from a crusade in Prussia, to hurry from Chalons to the rescue. The bloody sequel showed what a handful of trained warriors could accomplish against these ill-armed and half-naked rustic cut-throats. A single charge sufficed to scatter them in hopeless rout, and several thousands were either killed or drowned in the Marne before the victors were compelled by sheer exhaustion to desist from the butchery. A terrible retribution now overtook the misguided Jacques, as the result of this successful rally. The nobles, emerging from their hiding places, banded themselves together in their turn, and attacked the villages, slaying, torturing, burning as they went. The capture and execution of Calle, their leader, by the King of Navarre, who inveigled the credulous rustic to his doom, followed by another butchery at Montdidier, where Navarre attacked and slaughtered 3,000 of them, broke the spirit of his followers. The remnants of the horde were hunted down like so many packs of wolves. Before the end of June 20,000 had perished —a terrible vengeance for the murder of a handful of nobles, some of whom after all were not free of grave crimes, and the destruction of over a hundred castles. These noble beasts of prey might at least have abstained from violating women and slaughtering them and their innocent children. The wild beast lurks under knight's mantle as well as under peasant's blouse in this century of degraded mortals.

The hope of establishing a free and patriotic government by a national insurrection dashed, Marcel had recourse once more to the alliance of the King of Navarre as the only means of saving the situation. At his invitation Navarre came to Paris from St Denis, where he had established his headquarters, harangued the multitude from the Hôtel de Ville in his facile patriotic vein, and was in consequence appointed captain of the capital. Had he been the honest, self-sacrificing patriot he professed to be, he might have dictated terms to the regent, and inaugurated an era of hope for ruined France. But he was merely acting a part for his own interest, was in fact negotiating with Edward for a partition of France, and his intervention only made the destruction of the popular party more certain. As most of the nobles in the town refused to lend their support to a democratic movement, Marcel was

compelled to hire the services of the brigand chiefs at Epernon and other places within reach. It was a hazardous step to seek the regeneration of the country at the hands of its destroyers, and shows the wretched expedient to which the popular dictator, whose popularity suffered from this discreditable device, was reduced. With such a leader and such an army, ready to pillage friend and foe alike, without compunction, reform was doomed. Navarre set out in quest of the enemy, but instead of fighting, entered into a friendly parley with the commander of the royal troops, and returned to Paris. No wonder that Paris was disgusted with such a captain, and before the ill-concealed marks of its anger Navarre rode off, in affected dudgeon, to St Denis. His next move was to seek an interview with the regent, who had advanced to Charenton, and maintained a strict blockade of the east side of the capital, under pretext of bringing about a reconciliation between him and the citizens. Instead of this, he sold himself and Paris to the regent for the promise of 800,000 florins. Renewed outburst of anger at Paris, which saw in its captain a traitor, in spite of his efforts to represent the transaction as a monument of his patriotism. Another attempt at compromise —this time with guarantees for the safety of the reform leaders— proved equally illusory.

The outlook for Marcel was now desperate. Paris was starving, and Navarre's brigands, instead of procuring supplies, were busy plundering and burning the villages in the western environs from which food could alone reach the city. Some of these brigands were English mercenaries in Navarre's service, whose pay was furnished by the starving capital. "Down with these English robbers," shouted the populace, which in its undiscriminating fury applied the name of the hated foreigner to these bands without respect of nationality, killed every one of Navarre's followers that fell in its way, and forced him and Marcel to lead it against the marauders, only to be surprised and driven back to the capital with a loss of several hundreds. There was only one expedient left to the popular tribune, now fast losing his influence and his popularity — to try to make of Navarre an energetic and consistent champion of reform by offering to place the crown of France on his head. During the night of the 31st July–1st August Navarre should be admitted into the city, with his army, as potential King of France. It was the last straw of the drowning man, for Marcel had lost command of the situation, and the agents of the regent were busy sowing treachery in Paris itself. One of these, Jean Maillart, who had been bribed to desert his leader, was in the secret, and took his measures

accordingly. At midnight on the 31st July Marcel repaired to the gate St Denis, with a small band of armed followers, and ordered the keys to be delivered to Josseran de Macon, the King of Navarre's treasurer. Maillart, who had taken the precaution to be on the scene, demurred, and a hot altercation ensued. The disputants separated,—Maillart to convene his accomplices and raise the city with the cry of "Montjoie and St Denis, to the king, to the duke;" Marcel to seize the gate St Antoine. Here, too, he was forestalled by the emissaries of the regent, and during the altercation that followed he and two of his friends were struck dead by some of the guards (not, as Froissart has it, by Maillart himself), and their mangled bodies afterwards dragged through the streets and hung on a gibbet before the church of St Catherine. When Navarre arrived, he found the gates barred in his face, and the walls manned by the royalists, who repulsed an attack on the Bastille St Antoine, and compelled the would-be king to retire. Charles of Normandy returned to his palace in triumph, two days later, to receive the submission of the cowed city, after the axe of the executioner had prepared the way. Marcel and his scheme of a patriotic parliamentary government had disappeared in the abyss of conflicting and selfish interests, leaving the legacy of faction and civil war to aggravate the horrors of two years of abortive revolution.[1]

The victory of the regent brought no respite to the miserable country. Baffled in the attempt to obtain the crown for himself, Navarre hoped, at least, to partition the kingdom with Edward III.,[2] who, in spite of the truce, lent himself to the policy of selfish aggression. The civil war which ensued was too petty a business to be worth trying the patience of the reader with its recital. It was a continuation of the drama of pillage, outrage, murder, whose disgusting barbarities form monotonous, if revolting reading. Navarre and his locust tribe of brigands—English, Gascon, Norman, Breton, Navarrese, etc.—swept, almost unchecked, over Burgundy, Champagne, Picardy. Here and there, there was an effort at resistance on the part of the regent, notably at Amiens, where the Count of St Pol frustrated an attempt to storm and sack the town, and at St Corneille, near Compiegne,

[1] For these events see Cont. of G. de Nangis, ii. 242-247, who is a sympathiser with the democracy; Grandes Chroniques, vi. 32-140, and Froissart (Luce), v. 71-118, who are the apologists of the monarchy and the aristocracy. Cf. Perrens, Etienne Marcel, a work which is both a vindication of the reformer, and a close study of this interesting movement.

[2] See treaty to this effect in Fœd., iii. 228, where it is wrongly dated 1st August 1351 instead of 1358. It is also given by Dumont, Corps Diplom., t. i. pt. 2, 265, and by Isambert, iv. 656-658, under the wrong date.

where the peasants found a hero in the Grand Ferré, whose mighty arm twice carried carnage into the brigand ranks and taught them to respect Jacques Bonhomme when thus potently led. How between famine and fighting there was a single soul left alive in the northern parts of France, after the winter of 1358-59, is a mystery to the reader of the harrowing chronicles. Somehow a remnant of the miserable inhabitants survived—in the woods, on the summit of some fortified hill, in some village church, transformed into the citadel of its heroic defenders.

To intensify the misery of the situation came the news that John had signed away half his kingdom to Edward as the price of his liberty (24th March 1359).[1] To their credit, the French people spurned the dishonourable transaction, and preferred to risk national annihilation to national disintegration. When the regent communicated the treaty, which his father sent for ratification, to a skeleton assembly of the Estates at Paris, in May 1359, a storm of indignation burst out in the court of the palace.[2] Rather let King John eat the bread of exile to the end of his days than barter one-half of his kingdom for liberty and render the other half a virtual province of England. The duke took advantage of this wave of patriotic anger to further the reaction against democracy. He denounced the tactics of the Estates of 1356 as conspiracy and treason, and restored the ministers whom they had compelled him to dismiss.[3] He obtained a subsidy to enable him to defend the country against the powerful army which Edward led in the autumn and winter of 1359-60 from Calais, *viâ* Reims, where he hoped to be crowned, and Paris, which he hoped to enter as conqueror, into the heart of France, to compel the acceptance of his terms, in co-operation with the King of Navarre, who, after agreeing to the Treaty of Melun (August 1359), again took the field against the regent. France appeared to be in the last extremity. It was saved from dissolution by the regent's wary tactics. Instead of risking a battle and courting catastrophe, Charles kept behind the strong walls of the capital, while Edward's army burned and plundered under his very eyes, patiently waiting till the very extremity of France's misery, on which the invading horde could no longer subsist, forced Edward to agree to the Treaty of Bretigny (8th May 1360). As it was, the English monarch had

[1] The text of the treaty was discovered at Poitiers by M. Lecointre Dupont. It is referred to by Walsingham, Historia Anglicana (ed. by Riley), i. 286, and the Chronicon Angliæ, p. 40.

[2] Froissart, vi. 182-187; Mat. Villani (Muratori), xiv. 551; Isambert, v. 54, 55.

[3] See decree of 28th May 1359 in Isambert, v. 55-60.

ample reason to be satisfied with the transaction, which, besides adding several counties to his French dominions (Poitou, Saintonge, Agen, Perigord, Limousin, Quercy, Angoumois, Rouergue), recognised his full sovereignty over Guienne and Gascony, and bound France to pay, in instalments, three million crowns as ransom money.[1]

John's return, though greeted with enthusiasm by the fickle Parisians, did not bring happiness to himself or France. The ransom hung like a millstone round the necks of king and people. To his request for a commutation, Edward turned a deaf ear, and it was a sheer impossibility, try how he might, to keep solvent in the face of an annual drain of 400,000 crowns. He bartered his daughter to Galeazzo Visconti, Lord of Milan, for 600,000 florins; he recalled the Jews in order to obtain from them a sum as entry money. He tried various other expedients, such as the re-establishment of the salt monopoly, impositions on wine and provisions, the establishment of provincial customs in those provinces which refused to share these impositions,—a measure then, and for long, extremely prejudicial to commerce. All which, in the harried condition of France, were impotent to keep him from bankruptcy. The continued ravages of the brigands, the restiveness of the King of Navarre over the question of the succession to the Duchy of Burgundy, and the return of the pestilence of 1348 contributed to multiply the misery of his impecuniosity and the general misery of the kingdom. In his desperation John bethought him of a crusade, in order to give employment to the brigand hordes elsewhere, as well as find an antidote to his sorrows and an outlet for his chivalrous religiosity in distant scenes. He actually took the cross at Avignon in the winter of 1363. Even the consolation of a romantic trip to the East was denied him, and instead of leading his brigand hordes to do battle for the Holy Church against the infidel, he was fain to cross the Channel in the beginning of the following year to essay apparently the reduction of his ransom.[2] His mission was unsuccessful, and

[1] For the treaty see Fœdera, iii. 487 *et seq.*, and Isambert, v. 75-94. It was ratified at Boulogne, 26th October 1360, Fœd., iii. 514-518; Isambert, v. 100-105. For these events see also Froissart, vi. 202-292; Cont. of G. de Nangis, ii. 296-313; Chronique des Quatre Premiers Valois, 100-117; Grandes Chroniques, vi. 165-202; Chronique Normande, 149-152; Mat. Villani (Muratori), xiv. 577 *et seq.*; Chron. Angliæ, 40-49; Walsingham, i. 286-295; Scalachronica, 186-196.

[2] It is not quite clear, as asserted by the historians, that he went to take the place of his runaway son, the Duke of Anjou, one of the hostages for the Treaty of Bretigny. The safe conduct granted by Edward shows that he was under no constraint. Another explanation, which suggested itself to the gossip of the time, was his passion for an English court beauty. See G. de Nangis.

death came upon him on the 8th April 1364, while passing festive days at London in the hope of coaxing the slippery Edward into compliance. In these melancholy circumstances ended one of the most miserable reigns on record, which is, however, very important in French constitutional history. It witnessed the genesis of that movement for parliamentary government which, though unsuccessful in the meantime, was to reappear again and again, and points the way to the remote future.

John bequeathed to his son a task with which only a born administrator could have hoped to grapple successfully. Worse could hardly come at any rate, for it would be difficult to parallel these ten years of invasion, defeat, unceasing devastation. Happily we light at last among these early Valois, on a true administrator, a real king in Charles V., and the nation learned with joy that it had for the present touched the nadir of misery, and rose steadily for sixteen years in a welcome rebound of sane, beneficent government. Fully half of these were years of war, it is true,—war of the barbarous species of fourteenth-century chivalry; but it was a war in which France was the winner, and its enemy the loser,—a war which left Edward III. in 1375 master of only a few square miles of his French territory, and not a single inch, except Calais, of his French conquests. Charles was no warrior king. Unlike his father and his grandfather, he disliked camps, and had no love of military and royal display. But he was a man of brains, if not of show, and he could learn and apply the lessons of a campaign, if he preferred not to conduct one himself. He could take the advice of able generals, who, like himself, had the capacity to perceive the defects of a system and adopt the tactics fitted to secure success. Better still, he could recognise military merit, and give way to it. He saw in Bertrand du Guesclin the fighting genius that he was not fool enough to imagine in himself, and to Bertrand, whom he made Constable, he left the supreme direction of the rough work of campaigning. The Breton captain splendidly justified his confidence. In 1375 Charles was master of France; the English conqueror was for the nonce ousted from French soil. French nationality owed to his reign a powerful inspiration, which the factious period that was to follow could not entirely obliterate. It gave to it the force and depth that victory lends, and defeat had well-nigh exhausted.

While Bertrand wielded the sword to such purpose, Charles wielded the sceptre with equally good effect. He exemplified anew the strange phenomenon that the son of a weak king might be a St Louis, for on him the mantle of the great Louis seemed to have

fallen. After a sadly long interval of misgovernment, the honest and energetic administrator appears once more. His moral character stands very high, making allowance for the crudities of the age. To the swearing, ribald cavalier the sixteen years of his reign must have been years of Babylonian captivity, for to dishonour a woman or read an obscene tale was to incur disgrace in the pure atmosphere of his court.[1] The caterers to vice were deprived of the right to let their houses to women of ill-fame,[2] and even the game of dice was forbidden.[3] Hanging was too good for the miscreants who resorted to violation and oppression during the march of his army, and even the Jew could count on the king's impartial justice against the malice or the extortions of Christians.[4] Nay, Charles was the patron of a certain amount of liberty of conscience. No Jew should be forced to become a Christian, or compelled to go to church. True devotion being the only nurse of religion, it is irreligious to molest the Jew into formal compliance with Christian rites.[5] To Charles the kingship is a charge, not a mere dignity, and its function consists in doing good and upholding righteousness.[6] Hence the strict censorship of officials, high and low, throughout the provinces, by the visits of "reformers," the punishment of corruption without fear or favour, the reward of honest service.[7] Hence the endeavour to ease the overweight of taxation on the poor, particularly the reduction, by one half, of the salt tax, the revocation of the royal domains alienated since the time of Philip IV.,[8] the wise patronage extended to agriculture, industry, and commerce, the protection and privilege granted to foreign merchants,[9] and the exemption of certain articles (corn, wine, wool, salt) from export dues,[10] in order to stimulate trade. Charles' aim was to nurse prosperity in order to enrich the nation, as well as benefit the government, not, like his predecessors, to impoverish the nation for the sake of the government.

The most potent means to this end was the reform of the coinage, and the abandonment of the wretched system of arbitrary alterations of its value.[11] Even when the renewal of the war in 1369 interrupted

[1] Christine de Pisan, Petitot's Collection, v. 306, 307.

[2] Isambert, v. 320.

[3] *Ibid.*, v. 322.

[4] Christine de Pisan, v. 289, 290.

[5] "Sachans que les sacrements de sainte eglise ne doivent pas estre administrés par force, et que aussi nuls n'y doit estre constraint, si ce n'est par vraye devotion" (Isambert, v. 321).

[6] Christine de Pisan, vi. 59.

[7] See Ordinance of 13th November 1372, Isambert, v. 380-386.

[8] Isambert, v. 217, 218.

[9] *Ibid.*, v. 188-208.

[10] *Ibid.*, v. 454.

[11] See, however, Isambert, v. 338.

this all too short interval of peaceful development, France showed its appreciation of this enlightened government by the readiness of its response to the demand for a subsidy, even to the extent of submitting to a hearth tax, and to the renewal of impositions on articles of consumption. If he did not convoke the States-General and resumed the control of the finances which they had wrested from him as regent, he at least consulted representatives of the three orders, whom he combined with the Parliament of Paris and the princes of the blood as an advisory council.[1] His experiences as regent had left an unfavourable impression on a mind whose prudence was very marked, and he doubtless considered himself, not without reason, better fitted to ensure the welfare of the people than a debating assembly liable to intrigue and faction, and beset by the quarrels and conflicting interests of its three orders. While he strove to restrain, he did not altogether ignore the popular element in legislation and administration, and in addition to consulting the Notables and the Provincial Estates,[2] he permitted the inhabitants of the fiscal districts to choose their own tax collectors, on condition that the whole district should be caution for the amount assessed. The system, as subsequently practised, might become onerous and unjust, but under an honest and energetic monarch, whose eye was on every district through his "reformers," the hardship was not as yet sensible.

Charles did not, in his reforming zeal, go the length of establishing a permanent army, for the repression of lawless violence as well as for the defence of the country, but he strove to secure the efficiency and discipline of the forces which the renewal of the war compelled him to maintain in the field. The captains of companies were bound by ordinance to pay their men instead of pocketing their wages, and allowing them to pay themselves by pillage. The constable and the marshal were compelled to make a correct return of the numbers serving, in order to obviate the practice of making false returns and thus increasing the nefarious earnings of the commanders. The companies, or as we should call them, the regiments, should be maintained at their proper strength, should really consist of the number on the pay-sheet, and should swear to serve their time and refrain from pillage.[3]

What redounds, perhaps, most to his credit is the fact that the king of this war-convulsed France was a man of culture, the

[1] See Isambert, v. 269. [2] *Ibid.*, v. 298, 397.

[3] See the important ordinance on the reorganisation of the army in Isambert, v. 398-404, 13th January 1373.

friend of scholars, and a zealous patron of education.[1] "It pertains to the glory and honour of kings to have in their kingdom men distinguished by their knowledge and virtues, so that, guiding their action by their wisdom, they may reign with felicity and exalt their majesty thereby."[2] His reign witnessed the faint dawn of the Renascence north of the Alps, and the literary tastes of Charles fitted him to be its Mecænas. In this mad fourteenth century it is a relief to find a king who, in contrast to the fighting maniac, sought to govern himself by reason, and taught the world to admire a sovereign who was not a man of arms, but an apostle of culture. Certainly a much needed lesson. In spite of his arduous official labours, he found time to devote some hours of the day to reading and discussion, which embraced the wide fields of history, theology, science, philosophy. To him the students of the universities owed the privilege of exemption from the impositions on articles of consumption, and on the books and parchments used in their studies.[3] Himself an ardent book lover, his greatest treasure was the library in the Louvre, which owed its existence to his zeal as a collector, while his generous patronage of scholars, architects, men of science, is a worthy anticipation of that of a Louis XII. and a Francis I. His reign, like theirs, may boast its architectural and even its literary monuments, which excited the wonder of the age. In the capital, the Bastille, the Pont Neuf, and the Hôtel St Paul; in its environs, the castles of Melun, Beauté, St Germain, which he constructed or rebuilt; the translation of the Bible by Raoul de Presles, the translation of Aristotle by Nicolas Oresme, the "Songe du Verge," the "Songe du Vieux Pélerin," bespeak a new intellectual life, sedulously nursed from the throne. The philosopher-king, who was also an indefatigable administrator and reformer in the midst of the Hundred Years' War, is indeed a phenomenon, especially when we bear in mind that this philosopher-king was the son of John de Valois. To mention his piety were superfluous—all the French kings, even the worst of them, were pious men—were it not for the fact that this king was a Christian in practice as well as profession.

[1] Christ. de Pisan, v. 284, vi. 22-70.

[2] Isambert, v. 391. Ordinance conferring privileges on the University of Angers.

[3] *Ibid.*, v. 269, 319, 334, 369.

[4] For the character of Charles V., see especially the "Livre des Fais et bonnes Meurs du sage roy Charles V.," by Christine de Pisan in Petitot's Collection, tom. v. and vi. Christine was the daughter of Thomas de Pisa, the scientific prodigy of the age, whom Charles lured from Italy to Paris by the bait of a rich pension. She was the most accomplished woman of her century.

Even the reign of Charles V. has its shadows, however, though the shadows darken only its last years. Two years before his death Languedoc rose in revolt against the oppressive exactions of its governor, his brother, the Duke of Anjou. His own maladroit action goaded the Bretons into rebellion. In spite of reforming economy (Charles left a treasure of 17,000,000 livres walled up in Vincennes), the taxation necessary to support seven years of war had been heavy enough to breed discontent, where it did not nurse rebellion. In the last year of his reign the English invader again ploughed his devastating course into the heart of France. Pope Clement VII. at Avignon was confronted by Pope Urban VI. at Rome, and schism as well as revolt was threatening the disruption of the kingdom when, on the 16th September 1380, he was snatched from the toil and trouble of an embarrassing situation at the early age of forty-four years.

These troubles were omens of evil for the future, for Charles' successor was a boy of twelve, destined to acquire melancholy fame as the mad Charles VI. There could be no doubt of *his* insanity at all events. While Philip and John had acted the madmen in their capacity as rulers, poor Charles turned out to be a veritable maniac. The history of France under this maniac was tragic enough. It is a terrible compendium of defeat, revolt, revolution, faction war as well as foreign war, schism, anarchy,—the last long agony, it appeared, of a nation. The personal government of a Charles V. might be good as long as it lasted, but given a minority, with quarrelsome and ambitious uncles as regents, and a weak king after a stormy interregnum, and the relapse into confusion and oppression was inevitable. A reforming administration which depends on the personality of the monarch and is not rooted in national institutions can only be transient. Mistrust of the nation, as represented by the Estates contributed to the undoing of the system of Charles V. It left the nation the prey of faction, incapacity, reaction, with no national representation, trained in affairs, to interpose its experience and its patriotism. The good work of the enlightened administrator thus fell to pieces after his decease. In substituting himself for the nation he forgot that while the king dies, the nation lives, and that born administrators in these anarchic ages may be counted by the centuries. Charles V. died at least forty years too soon, for, to perpetuate his system, he should have outlived his son. The nation, too, had had its turn and failed, though it had not had a fair chance. It is questionable whether, at this stage, it was fitted to improve its opportunity

SOURCES OF THIS CHAPTER.—Isambert, Récueil Général des Anciennes Lois Françaises, tomes iv. and v.; Chroniques de Jean Froissart, Luce's edition, ten tomes, and the edition of Lettenhove, tomes i. to viii.; Chronique de Guillaume de Nangis (Continuation), tom. ii., Guerand's edition; Chronique des Quatre Premiers Valois, 1327-1393 (edited by Luce); Les Grandes Chroniques de France, edited by Paulin Paris, tomes v. and vi. (1270-1381); Chronique Normande du Quatorzième Siècle, edited by Molinier; Livre des Fais, etc., de Charles V., par Christine de Pisan, in tomes v. and vi. of Petitot's Collection (prem. serie); Rymer's Fœdera (Record edition), vols. ii. and iii.; Rotuli Parliamenti, for the reign of Edward III., vol. ii.; Perrens, Etienne Marcel. From these and other contemporary sources I have given a larger sketch of the political and military history of the period in my "History of Edward III.," Longmans, 1900.

## CHAPTER III

### THE MONARCHY IN CONFLICT WITH FACTION—TRIUMPH OF MONARCHY UNDER CHARLES VII. (1380-1461).

THE first act of the council was to annul the law by which Charles V. had fixed the majority of the French kings at fourteen and appointed the Duke of Anjou regent.[1] It declared Charles VI. capable of ruling, but reserved to his uncles, the Dukes of Anjou, Burgundy, Berry, and Bourbon, the administration in his name.[2] This was merely to set a premium on misgovernment by affording scope to the quarrelsomeness and jealousies of the royal uncles. This friction did not disappear with the departure of Anjou to Italy, in 1382, to assert his title to the crown of Naples, and find a miserable death in the attempt.[3] Their discord continued to trouble France for the eight years during which this arrangement lasted, and made its sinister influence felt all through Charles' unhappy reign. That reign actually began only in 1388, when Charles dismissed his guardians and substituted the more distinguished of his father's ministers. It was a miserable interval for the people, and the king's intermittent madness, which first showed itself four years later, tended only too tragically to perpetuate that misery for many years to come.

The accession of Charles was signalised by the demand for the abolition of all taxes imposed since the time of Philip VI. This was a reaction in favour of parliamentary government with a vengeance. It was certainly visionary, yet to enforce the demand, Paris, Rouen, and other cities rushed to arms, and frightened the dukes into formal compliance.[4] Though they ultimately suppressed the revolt at Rouen with sanguinary severity,[5] the seditious attitude of the Parisian *Maillotins* (men of the iron mallet) forced them to convoke the States-

[1] Isambert, v. 415-424, and 431-439.

[2] *Ibid.*, vi. 538-540.

[3] Christine de Pisan, vi. 159-161.

[4] See Letters of Revocation in Isambert, vi. 542-544; cf. Chronique du Religieux de St Denis, or Chron. de Charles VI., translated and edited by M. L. Bellaguet, i. 129-133.

[5] Chron. de Charles VI., i. 149.

General of Languedoil, which wrested from them the reforming ordinance of January 1381.[1] "Our constituents," said they, "will rather die than suffer these impositions?"[2] Democratic revolt in the Netherlands threatened to intensify the democratic mood of Paris, which maintained an active correspondence with the rebellious Flemings,[3] and cherished the spirit of Etienne Marcel. As at the accession of Philip VI., the Flemish cities, Ghent and its leader, Philip van Artevelde, in the van, rose against their oppressive Count, Louis le Male, and overthrew his despotic rule at the battle of Bruges (1382). Once more the rights of monarch and feudal magnate were identified by this forcible outburst of burgher independence, and once more a French army marched northwards to vindicate their identical interests. At Roosebeke (27th November 1382), as formerly at Cassel, liberty paid a terrible price for its temerity. The burgher militia was annihilated once more by the French noblesse. Twenty-six thousand of them, according to some accounts, lay heaped together in one vast pile of slaughtered or suffocated bodies.[4] With this superlative butchery of Flemish democrats to their credit, the dukes returned to overawe the democracy of Paris, Rouen, Sens, Orleans, Reims, Chalons, etc., hang its leaders without trial, abolish the privileges of municipalities and trade guilds, suppress the right of public meeting, exact enormous fines which went into the pockets of the dukes' creatures, extort the oppressive taxes once more, in spite of the refusal of the States-General to accord a single sou, and generally to rule by the drastic expedients of martial law.[5]

The expedition to Flanders was the prelude of war with England, which rather tardily espoused the cause of the Flemish burghers, and could not save them from falling under the sway of the Duke of Burgundy, on the death, on 13th January 1384, of Louis le Male, whose daughter and only child was the wife of Duke Philip.[6] Success only whetted the martial ardour of the young king and his wardens, who next planned a supreme effort against England itself, and wrung out of the miserable people every available sou to equip and maintain the vast fleet and army massed at Sluys in the summer of 1386. Nothing came of the quixotic enterprise, in spite of superhuman preparations, except the loss of the fleet and untold misery to the taxpayer, who was mercilessly fleeced to pay for the folly of his rulers.[7] Equally inane, and equally oppressive, was the project

[1] Isambert, vi. 553-556.
[2] Chron. de Charles VI., i. 151.
[3] Chron. de Charles VI., i. 153.
[4] *Ibid.*, i. 175-222.
[5] Isambert, vi. 569, 574.
[6] Chron. de Charles VI., i. 299.
[7] Chron. de Charles VI., i. 451-461.

of an invasion of Germany in the following year, which ended in retreat and disgrace;[1] but the repeated failure of this policy of reckless and disastrous adventure succeeded at least in ridding the taxpayer of the tyranny of the Dukes of Berry and Burgundy, whom Charles, at the instigation of the Cardinal of Laon and the Notables, politely dismissed with thanks,[2]—Berry to his governorship of Languedoc, Burgundy to his wide domains.[3]

The choice of his father's ministers—the Sire de la Rivière, the Constable, Oliver de Clisson, and John de Montaigu—to fill their places evinced both wisdom and goodwill towards the people on the part of the young king. The new ministers—the "Marmousets," the little monkeys, as they were nicknamed by the supercilious nobility—set energetically to work to reform and retrench, and their measures brought a transient amelioration. They essayed the reform of justice and administration, the retrenchment of taxation, of expenses.[4] In response to the bitter cry of Languedoc, Charles even made a reform tour in the south in 1390 to remedy the wretched *régime* of the Duke of Berry. The duke and his treasurer, Boutaric, had been guilty of the most heartless and arbitrary exactions, and so incensed was the king at the revelation of their misdeeds that he had Boutaric, who sought to shield himself by the plea of acting under Berry's orders, burned as a heretic for want of a better legal pretext. The unlucky Boutaric was told that if he would confess heresy, he would be sent before the ecclesiastical judges, and regain his liberty. Boutaric readily confessed that he did not believe in God or the immortality of the soul, only to discover that he had been tricked, and had tricked himself as well, by his sham profession of unbelief, to a terrible death.

This fit of philanthropy was short-lived. Charles' fickleness, profusion, profligacy, would have frustrated the efforts of the most persistent reformer. Government in these times in France was a sadly contradictory business. King and reformer were too often at cross purposes. There was no logic, no sequence of theory and practice. The king is supposed to be the father of the people, and to use the best talent and character in the management of the child, in other words, the government of the nation. A dissipated youth, who certainly means well, makes, however, but a very indifferent paterfamilias, and in spite of all that talent and character can advise and attempt, the family, the nation, is the unhappy victim of the paternal dissipation. If the brain of this dissipated youth should

[1] Chron. de Charles VI., i. 553-555.
[2] Isambert, vi. 640-642.
[3] Chron. de Charles VI., i. 555-561.
[4] Isambert, vi. 642 *et seq.*

get unhinged as the fruit of his excesses, woe to the family. Unhappily for France for many a day to come, this was the tragic doom of Charles VI. His brain gave way under the strain of over-excitement and self-indulgence, of that headlong course of debauchery which shattered his nerves, and left him at the age of twenty-five a moral and intellectual wreck. He was ruined partly by his good qualities. At twenty-one, all the chroniclers agree in ascribing to him many virtues. He had great physical strength, a fine figure, distinguished features. He was a perfect cavalier, skilful with both bow and lance, second to none in every military exercise. The most affable of men, too, "distinguished," says the chronicler, "by such frankness that he saluted the least of the people with the utmost kindness, and called them by their names. He entered freely into conversation with those who wished to speak with him, or whom he chanced to encounter, no matter where, and never refused to hear those who had a request or a complaint to make. Thus, as long as he lived, he drew to himself the love of everybody."[1] He is likewise credited with "great sense and intelligence," and though slow to forget an injury, was not naturally choleric, was mild and kindly, and only lost his temper under great provocation; generous to a fault; the merriest, most unaffected young man in the world, to whom royal display was irksome, and the royal robes and other kingly emblems an eyesore. All this is pleasant to read, and is sufficient to show that Charles VI. had the making of a great character in him. But the boy who had been a full fledged king at twelve, under the charge of three uncles, who were not the best of guardians, had a poor chance of learning self-restraint, and Charles' good qualities, as well as his nervous system, went to seed in a few years in the rank and foul soil of an ill-regulated youth. He became a spendthrift and a debauchee, and in 1392, the over-excitement of mind and nerves, acting on an impaired constitution, exploded in a fit of madness, which was never permanently cured. This madness broke out tragically while on the march through the Forest of Maine to punish Pierre de Craon, the would-be murderer of the Constable, Clisson, and a creature of Clisson's deadly enemy, the Duke of Brittany. Suddenly a wild-looking man sprang out of the bush, seized the bridle of the king's horse, and shouted, "Stop, noble king, you are betrayed." Charles, nevertheless, rode moodily on for half an hour out of the forest into a sandy plain, scorched by the broiling August sun, followed by the man shrieking his ill-omened warning. Suddenly the clang of two lances in accidental collision startled the silent king.

[1] Chron. de Charles VI., i. 565.

Setting spurs to his horse with the cry of "Treason, death to the traitors," he laid about him with the fury of a maniac, and before his broken sword could be snatched from his hand, four of his followers lay dead on the sand.[1] Charles' sanity was permanently shattered in spite of the debaucheries by which his old boon companions tried to restore it,—spite, too, of the profuse bleedings of the royal physicians, and the resources of the Church and the black art, of pilgrimages and processions, of subtle concoctions and mysterious incantations, of the invocation of the saints and the arts of the devil. There came intervals of sanity followed by relapses, each more desperate than its predecessor.[2] The poor king disowned his wife and children, did not even recognise himself.[3] Practically, at any rate, he had ceased to be king. The rest of his life is a long minority of thirty years, during which government was the plaything of princely faction, and the English invader found in France his happy hunting ground once more. His reforming ministers took to flight, for power now oscillated back to the Dukes of Berry and Burgundy,[4] of whom Burgundy was by far the most assertive and potent.

Burgundy was for a time practical King of France. His territorial power as lord of Burgundy and Flanders, and virtual lord of the Netherlands as well, was in fact that of a great sovereign, and his interests were not always those of France. As between France and England, for instance, he was obliged to reckon with the old commercial alliance of the manufacturing Flemings and the wool-producing English,[5] and his ambition to be the founder of a Burgundian kingdom tended to diminish his patriotism as a French prince of the blood. The fact did not conduce to make his renewed *régime* less disastrous than in the early years of Charles' reign. Now, as then, there was friction between him and Berry, still more between him and Louis of Orleans, the king's brother,[6] who, though nominally designated regent, in case of Charles' decease, or what amounted to the same thing, his madness, in January 1393,[7] had to be content meanwhile with a very subordinate *rôle*.

The statute-book, under Burgundy's auspices, contains some laudable measures, which ought in fairness to be mentioned to his

[1] Chron. de Charles VI., ii. 19-21.

[2] See, for instance, *ibid.*, ii. 87, 89. [3] *Ibid.*, ii. 87, 89.

[4] "Iterum regni regimen receperunt" (Chron. de Charles VI., ii. 26).

[5] See, for example, Isambert, vii. 134.

[6] "Et cetera eorum pene in nullo quod ad rem publicam specteret desideria consonabant . . . sic emula nimis et pertinaci de superioritate contencione perdurante" (Chronique de Charles VI., iii. 12). [7] Isambert, vi. 716

credit. Protection is extended to that eternal victim of the ill-nature of both kings and peoples, the Jew.[1] A commission is appointed to inquire into the exactions of the royal officials, with power to punish at discretion.[2] Sinecures are abolished,[3] the police reformed, and the prison administration improved.[4] The freedom of election to ecclesiastical sees is restored, and the Church is actually declared independent of the Avignon Pope, Benedict XIII., the Pope of Rome not being recognised at all.[5] All this is very good on paper, but sadly ineffective in practice, especially as good laws are, as a rule, nullified by bad ones. Thus the unlucky Jew is no sooner blessing the God of his fathers for the small mercy of at least toleration, than he is suddenly banished the kingdom, with loss of goods into the bargain;[6] while the Christian Jew, the corrupt tax-gatherer, and other swindling rascals in authority, are left to pursue the Jew's trade of fleecing the people. Pope Benedict is recognised once more, and much worse (the Avignon Pope being at best but a mere cypher), *taille* upon *taille*, aid upon aid, rigorous game laws, which confer on the peasant the high privilege of chasing the wild boar from his fields, but dares him to kill it, and other evil laws remain on record to demonstrate that Burgundy's ruling genius was not consistency in well-doing. There is continuity in nothing but contradiction, and this kind of continuity was not lessened when the Duke of Orleans strove to assert his right, as first prince of the blood and regent-designate, to the chief direction of affairs.[7] Louis of Orleans had some of the good and all the bad qualities of his brother, Charles VI. He had the faculty of making himself liked by the people, in spite of his excesses; he was gay and affable, ready and polished of speech, a born orator in fact;[8] but he was a rake of rakes, superficial, prodigal, the patron of debauch, the ally of the queen in profligacy, her paramour even, according to some stories, and altogether a more demented ruler than his insane brother. Here is a snapshot, taken from the faithful chronicler, of what this government meant to the people when it was the turn of the queen and her paramour to wield the sceptre for a time in 1405: "The extreme indifference to the interests of the people evinced by the queen and

[1] Isambert, vi. 731.
[2] *Ibid.*, vi. 732
[3] *Ibid.*, vi. 740.
[4] *Ibid.*, vi. 826.
[5] *Ibid.*, vi. 805, 825; cf. Chron. de Charles VI., iii. 598, 643.
[6] *Ibid.*, vi. 750; cf. Chron. de Charles VI., iii. 119, 123. This ordinance remained in force till 1789.
[7] For this see-saw between Burgundy and Orleans see, for instance, Isambert, vii. 59, 61, *et seq.*
[8] For his character, see Chron. de Charles VI., iii. 738.

the Duke of Orleans, during the illness of the king, excited keen discontent throughout the kingdom. The people did not refrain from cursing them publicly, saying that they had no other thought than to multiply taxes and exactions, despite of all justice, in order to fatten on the substance of the poor, and satisfy their execrable and blind cupidity. Their only striving was to enrich themselves at the expense of the kingdom, troubling themselves little about the miserable state of the king, whose expenses they restricted to such a degree, that his attendants could not spend a single crown above the scanty sum fixed for his maintenance. The people accused them, on the other hand, of throwing away the revenue on their worthless creatures, and allowing their purveyors to seize goods without paying for them. The amassing of riches, the enjoyment of the senses, were the sum and substance of their government, while they forgot to such a degree the rules and the duties of royalty, that they were the object of scandal to France, and the talk of foreign nations."[1] Occasionally the curses of the people penetrated to the ears of the queen, especially when it was the turn of the brave Augustine monk, Jacques Legrand, to preach before her majesty. "The goddess Venus alone reigns in your court," cried he boldly, in one of his outspoken harangues. "Drunkenness and debauch are her cortege, and turn night into day in the midst of the most dissolute dances. These infernal harpies, which besiege your court without ceasing, corrupt manners and enervate hearts. . . . Everywhere, noble queen, people speak of these disorders, and of many others which do you no honour. If you will not believe me, traverse the city in the disguise of a poor woman, and you will hear every word of it."[2] Jacques Legrand was blunt and honest, even as court preacher. It would be difficult to match him in this respect before the days of John Knox.

Being mortal enemies, uncle and nephew pulled at different strings in both foreign and domestic policy, and their eternal quarrels made the sad disharmony of government still sadder. Every effort on the part of the Dukes of Berry and Bourbon to reconcile them failed, or resulted only in sham understandings. Nor were the prayers and processions of the Church to this end more efficacious.[3] To the end of Charles' reign, the history of France is simply the history of princely faction—that of Burgundy affecting a popular and even a reforming *rôle*,—unworthy, much of it, of the designation of history, and, for us, not worth recording. Feudal anarchy has given place to the anarchy of the princes of the blood, or rather it is identified with and intensified by it, and this princely anarchy was

[1] Chron. de Charles VI., iii. 266. [2] *Ibid.*, iii. 268. [3] *Ibid.*, iii. 13, 14.

for a time of fell consequence to France and the monarchy. In 1404 Philip of Burgundy disappeared into the grave from this stage of civil strife and sham reconciliations, of intrigue and counter-intrigue, of check and counter-check, on which the actors exploit France for their selfish, factious ends.[1] Three years later (23rd November 1407), Louis of Orleans fell a victim to the knife of the assassins hired by his mortal enemy, John without Fear, Philip's son and successor.[2] He had at least the merit of being lamented, after a fashion, by the nation, if not by Paris, which was largely Burgundian, and his murder, instead of abating the spirit of faction, only sucked the nation more hopelessly into the whirlpool of civil strife. Under the nominal regency of the Dauphin, Louis, Duke of Guienne,[3] John, who had taken to flight after avowing the crime, returned to be whitewashed by Jean Petit and the Parisian clergy, who defended the doctrine of tyrannicide in his favour, and to be absolved by the king;[4] nay, to regain power,[5] and fan the wretched anarchy. It is a wonder that a nation thus governed by selfish factions managed to preserve its cohesion, and escape going to pieces in the anarchic whirl of egotistic ambitions.[6] Nations in those rough days had a tough existence indeed, and France is even said to have been passing prosperous these ten years, in spite of the efforts of its rulers to ruin it. There had been a spasmodic cessation of the struggle with England, Richard II., in 1396, having married Isabella, Charles' eldest daughter, and concluded a truce for twenty-eight years,[7] and though after the deposition of Richard, war had broken out afresh, it only touched the fringes of the kingdom.

It was, too, a time of intellectual quickening of a kind. The schism had robbed the Papacy of the nimbus of traditional respect, had in fact turned it into the laughing-stock of Europe and completed the work of Philip IV., as well as made the Christian religion itself the butt of the ridicule of the infidel.[8] Philip had taught

[1] Monstrelet, who is occasionally inclined to partiality to the Burgundian side, pays him the tribute of having ruled the kingdom well: "Il avoit regné et gouverné moult prudentement les besognes du royaume" (i. 143).

[2] Chron. de Charles VI., iii. 730-736.

[3] Isambert, vii. 157, 192, etc.

[4] *Ibid.*, vii. 176.

[5] *Ibid.*, vii. 229; Chron. de Charles VI., iv. 185 *et seq.*; Monstrelet, i. 210 *et seq.*

[6] For the abuses of the time see remonstrances presented by the Notables to the king in 1412, Isambert, vii. 279.

[7] Isambert, vi. 759; cf. Chron. de Charles VI., ii. 364-366.

[8] Chron. de Charles VI., i. 74: "Infidelibus catholice fidei sancta religio habita est ludibris."

Boniface who was master in the State; the rival Popes at Rome and Avignon were now undoing the papal authority in the Church, and rousing the critical spirit which was one day to dethrone not only rival Popes, but the Papacy itself.[1] In the schools doctors and students were researching and discussing, and their discussions, so menacing to the Pope, provided the more active minds with an intellectual pabulum far more nutritive than the petty quarrels of political cliques. The doctors of the University of Paris, in particular, to whom Charles turned for guidance, as between the rival Popes, were active reformers,[2] staunch advocates of the liberties of the Gallican Church, which were formally proclaimed in 1398, though the ordinance remained a dead letter;[3] public spirited men, too, who strove to bring reason and patriotism to bear on politics,[4] and marked their disapproval of the measures of government by suspending their lectures on occasion.[5] Some of these doctors, notably Pierre D'Ailly, Nicolas de Clemengis, Jean de Gerson, were exceedingly bold, outspoken men. Clemengis' denunciation of the ecclesiastical evils of the time might have fallen from the lips of a Knox, or a Luther. In reading these indictments of an effete Church, a demoralised Papacy, we feel as if within an inch of the Reformation, as if on the threshold of a moral, spiritual, and intellectual revolution. Nicolas de Clemengis, eloquent orator, fervent writer, is surely the man to accomplish what Wiclif had attempted in England, and what Hus was attempting in Bohemia—the reform of the Church, root and branch, in head and members. If not Nicolas de Clemengis, whose zeal evaporates in mere gas, and who lapses into the venal secretary of a schismatic Pope, then Jean de Gerson, erudite doctor, great preacher, strong character to boot, will surely do the work, with the aid of a General Council,[6] superior to the Pope. We are too sanguine by a whole century, for the Council of Pisa (1409) merely added a third Pope, Alexander V., to the two existing Popes, Benedict XIII. at Avignon, and Gregory XII. at Rome, whom it deposed, but who continued to hurl their pontifical curse on it and on each other all the same. The scandal and the demoralisation were worse than before. Alexander V. died the following year, of poison it is said, and his reputed poisoner, one of the most

[1] Chron. de Charles VI., i. 86: "Nunc privatim disceptando, conferendo, et scribendo, nunc publice in scolasticis actibus arguendo," etc.

[2] See, for instance, *ibid.*, ii. 95 *et seq.*

[3] Charles, after disowning Benedict XIII. in 1398, recognised him anew in 1403 (Isambert, vii. 63). In 1408 he declared himself neutral (*Ibid.*, vii. 185).

[4] Chron. de Charles VI., iv. 372. [5] *Ibid.*, ii. 746.

[6] See *ibid.*, iv. 207-241.

depraved scoundrels of Christendom, took his place as John XXIII. With John XXIII. as Pope and reformer, we have reached the nadir of that jugglery in sacred things, the zenith of that appalling pretension to the vicarship of God on the part of mortal man, which has too often dishonoured the Deity, abased the Church as a moral and spiritual institution, and shocked common-sense as well as religion. Jean de Gerson and Pierre D'Ailly set to work once more with their demand for reform by a General Council, and succeeded in making John XXIII. play the *rôle* of reformer in spite of himself. This time, at Constance, in 1414, there shall be an end of schism and iniquity; a single Pope, with a Council to keep him in awe of ill-doing, and enforce some sort of respectability at least, shall be put in the chair of St Peter, and the divorce of morality and religion at length cease. The Council succeeded in ending the schism for a time, by the appointment of Martin V.; it did not succeed in healing the schism between faith and practice. Nay, it burned the only real reformer of the age, John Hus, whose spirituality and intensity not even the Paris doctors could tolerate. By so doing, the Paris doctors stultified and paralysed their own reforming efforts and ensured the continued moral and spiritual declension of the Church for another century. But the reforming spirit was not altogether extinguished in the ashes of Hus. The intellectual ferment which this sorry schism nurtured, and which was already being fed from a nobler source, the study of antiquity, along with the moral and spiritual aspirations to which it had given a reactionary impulse, could not be burned out of existence by the savagely orthodox doctors of Constance. These doctors were too ecclesiastical, too conservative, to open their souls to the inspiration of a moral genius like that of Hus, but, mark it well, tradition and conservatism have found their enemy, and the enemy will reappear. From this inspiration will come, in future days, revolutions in Church and State in France and elsewhere, and tradition and conservatism will not be so successful another time.

The doctors of the University of Paris, who put their hands to an abortive reform of the Church, essayed at the same time the reform of the State.[1] Unfortunately, with equally futile results. The fact is, nevertheless, remarkable in this period of petty faction strife in State as well as in Church—the only political fact in it worthy of our attention. Here, too, the doctors had more than sufficient reason to try their skill on the rectification of abuse. The king was mad,

[1] See, for instance, Chron. de Charles VI., iv. 738 *et seq.*, for the scathing indictment of administration presented to Charles by the University in 1412.

the State was mad, the Church was mad, Church and State being in the hands of a set of hirelings who devoured both by their ungoverned passions. Reason was banished to the sanctum of the scholar, who saw and pondered, with the indignation of a reasonable being, this dissolution of sane government; to the hut of the poor man who did not know much, but knew what suffering meant at any rate, was conscious of the eternal burden of his misery. The tradition of human right still lived, in spite of the demented condition of the world. Man felt that, whatever might be, this was not the divinely and humanly appointed order of that world. That a whole people should be the victim of a few intriguing princes, not to speak of a mad king, whom it continued to love, as meaning well and doing well as far as he could in his sane intervals, was clearly not reasonable or just. That they should be the burden-bearers of a dissipated, heartless caste, which loved to display its *bravoure* on the battlefield (in its way a virtue and a service to the State, it is true), and its vices and contempt of the people in the sumptuous *hôtels* of the capital, could not be an ordinance of God, or a practice agreeable to common-sense. So reasoned enlightened men even in that age of darkness. It was a Chancellor of France, Miles de Dormans, who, in a speech to the Parisian malcontents in 1380, reminded the monarch that the people is after all the creator of kings, and ought to count for something. "Kings may deny it a hundred times if they like, but it is by the will of the people that they reign; it is the strength of the people which renders them formidable."[1] And one of these malcontents, a leather dresser, took the liberty to proclaim that he, too, was a man, and was not minded to be the victim of aristocratic pretensions. "Shall we never enjoy the sweets of repose and ease? Shall we never see an end of the ever-increasing cupidity of the nobles, who crush us without respite with unjust exactions, constantly multiplied, and reduce us to such a state of exhaustion, that, saddled with debts, we are forced each year to pay beyond our means? Do you realise, fellow-citizens, in what contempt you live? They would deprive you, without doubt, if they could, of your portion of the light of heaven. They are indignant that you breathe, that you speak, that you have human figures, and that you appear in the same public places with them. Why, say they, thus mingle heaven and earth? Doubtless these men, to whom we render a forced homage, for whose welfare we are ever awake, and who live from our substance, have no other thought than to shine in their gold and jewellery, and surround themselves with a great train of

[1] Chron. de Charles VI., i. 51.

domestics, build superb palaces, invent taxes in order to ruin the capital. The patience of the people has too long borne this pest of oppression; if we are not speedily delivered from this insupportable yoke, certain am I that the whole city will rush to arms, for we should rather wish death than submit to such misery."[1]

And it was not only the more impatient spirits of the middle class that spoke out their hatred of injustice and caste privilege. The peasant and the labourer found a voice to express their minds, and to remind the heartless higher orders of their humanity and their sufferings. Such a voice rang out in pathetic, yet energetic tones in the "Complainte du pauvre Commun et des pauvres Laboureurs de France." It is almost the only voice direct from the people audible in the midst of the disharmony of class selfishness and oppression which passes, in the pages of the chroniclers, for history. Behind this there is an unwritten history, full of pathos and tragedy—the history of the people of France as distinct from that of its selfish and contentious masters. "The days pass for us in great misery, and we know not what will become of us," is the plaintive keynote of this history. And yet moans the poor man, "Christians are we truly, and in God we are all your brothers, yea, we are the foundation on which you build." And so on, as may be read in Monstrelet.[2]

The age of Marcel was not dead; the tradition of a far more remote age, the age of the equality of human beings, born to equal rights, was not dead either. Again and again its memory has burst forth in human history, whether it is an illusion or not. At periods of demoralisation and misery we find that looking backwards to the origin of society, in the rebound from tyranny and injustice, which brings to the oppressed the glimmer of *their* nobility as created in the image of God; brings too at times the determination to make an end of tyranny and injustice. There is some relief from the monotony of misery in this thought backwards; the only consolation at such times for the miserable mass. In his inmost soul man has ever been the enemy of the social and political convention that makes him the slave, the inferior of another man, dooms him to the life-long martyrdom of a subordination that recognises not equality before the law, nor practises even equality before God. There is no real right in acquired privileges which revolt the soul of even the humblest man, and all legislation, all theory based merely on the historic, divorced from the human, is legislation based on prejudice and wrong. The feudal seigneur might think differently. The feudal seigneur has had a rude awakening at times, and Paris in this year, 1412, was intent

[1] Chron. de Charles VI., i. 47.

[2] Monstrelet, iv. 387-399.

on prescribing one of those rough disillusions which Paris was to administer so pitilessly three hundred and eighty years later.

Why should not the scholar and the poor man unite in reforming the State? Why not the Paris University doctor and the Paris butcher—the Cabochien—make common cause in putting an end to the demented condition of society and the State? And why should not the Paris municipality, if not the States-General, which are in abeyance, or the Parliament, which refuses,[1] make a third party to the alliance, the municipality being largely at this date in the hands of the Cabochiens? These three elements coalesce accordingly to put the State, society, on a sane footing, and as man, especially in France, must always act in such matters an illogical, chaotic part, the reformers must needs take the Duke of Burgundy as patron of their undertaking. To work, then, under the Burgundian colours—the *chaperon blanc*, or white hood—against the Armagnacs, as the Orleanist or princely party was now called, whose badge was a white scarf.[2] It was rough work indeed, as was to be expected from the Cabochien butchers and skinners whom the doctors and the municipality could not at times moderate, and who reformed the Armagnacs with pike and bludgeon on occasion. This rough work of killing and pillaging the opponents of the Duke of Burgundy was left to the Cabochiens; the work of reform was the part of the doctors, who had insisted on and obtained the recovery of the rights of the municipality, wrested from it after the anti-democratic victory of Roosebeke.[3] Theirs, too, the work of recovering justice and liberty for the nation. The democrat and the demagogue, the man of culture and the man of the street, worked hand in hand, now as subsequently, in the internal struggles of France. Only on this occasion the democrat kept the upper hand over the demagogue, on paper at least, as appears from the celebrated ordinance which the doctors drew up, after an exhaustive examination of the laws of France lasting several months. Their labours were interrupted by the gathering of a storm, in the form of a conspiracy against the reformers on the part of the Armagnacs. The storm burst, but it was on the heads of the conspirators. As in 1789, the Bastille was besieged by a furious mob thirsting for the blood of the traitors to the nation. The court ceded in time to prevent extremities, but on relapsing into its treasonable tricks, the populace once more, under Jean de Troyes, doctor of medicine, prototype of Dr.

[1] Choix de Pièces Inédites relatives au Regne de Charles VI., edited by L. D. D'Arcq, i. 362, 363.

[2] Mémoires de Pierre de Fenin, 16.

[3] Isambert, vii. 215 (10th September 1409).

Marat, and Eustache de Pavilly, doctor of divinity, forerunner, let us suppose, of Robespierre, brought it to its senses by haranging the king and the Dauphin in their palaces, and arresting and thrashing reactionary seigneurs.[1] At last the doctors, from whose political maternity France was to derive millennial happiness, were delivered of their grand scheme,[2] which was unfortunately to prove an abortion. Its abortive fate saves us the trouble of inflicting an examination of it on the reader. It was, in fact, anything but revolutionary, for the doctors are too learned, too historical, to produce a theory for the pikes of the Cabochiens to transform into practice, as in later days. Nay, they did not even go the length of the revolutionary theorist of half a century earlier, and did not add a single new idea to the science of politics. A strange thing, certainly, in the history of doctors addicted to politics, and eminently creditable to their common-sense in the circumstances. They were evidently practical men, to whom the main question is the question of the redress of grievances, not the application of desperate remedies which might make the cure worse than the disease, as in 1357-59. They did not dethrone the king and set up a supreme National Assembly, which might have talked the people into anarchy. They did not put the constitution into a new mould, and transform feudal monarchic France into a democratic State without compass or anchor. Their reforms were administrative, not constitutional; reform of the administrative oppressions and injustice, tyranny and corruption, which had so often victimised the people. If they could have succeeded in this, they would have benefited the people infinitely more than by positing its sovereignty, which it was of course totally unfitted to wield, and merely intensifying the chaos of the State. Their grand antidote is not to make the people sovereign in the meantime, but to give it some measure of control of that which it is best fitted to understand—its own interests. Let the people, or rather its representatives, elect its judges and local officials, magistrates, provosts, seneschals, bailies. Unfortunately the people never got a chance of testing the efficacy of the remedy. It was one thing to legislate, it was another thing to apply legislation, however enlightened, in this distracted France of 1412-13. Organisation is not usually the strong point of doctors of medicine, law, philosophy, and theology. The ordinance was a complete failure in practice, never in fact got the length of practice.

[1] For these events, see Chron. de Charles VI., v. 1-53; cf. Monstrelet, iii. 1 *et seq.*

[2] Isambert, vii. 283-386. It consists of 258 articles, embracing every branch of administration.

The Cabochiens wrecked it with their pikes and bludgeons, frustrated by their anarchic successes the good intentions of the men of letters. Reaction accordingly set in to the destruction, on the part of the angry Armagnacs, of both the Cabochiens and the ordinance. It was promulgated on the 25th May 1413, it was revoked on the 5th September following.[1]

The excesses of the butcher rabble had wrecked the cause of reform, and given to party feud a prolonged lease of existence. Party feud now threatened to wreck France itself. The Armagnacs had triumphed over reform, and their triumph, which did not mean good government or the cessation of internal strife, was followed by the terrible slaughter of Azincourt, and the subjection of half the kingdom to a foreign potentate. As at Crecy and Poitiers, a large proportion (some say ten thousand) of the French noblesse lay in the mud, a crushed and mangled heap of slain, at the close of that tragic 25th October day, 1415. Their dash and their senseless *bravoure* could not make good the lack of brains, of moral and civic virtue, which made them both poor soldiers and poor patriots. It was the third crushing blow within three-quarters of a century to the effete chivalry of France, which had evidently not changed for the better since Crecy and Poitiers. The stout English yeoman, under the martial Henry V., the worthy inheritor of Edward's generalship,[2] was both as man and as soldier vastly superior to the frivolous, superficial, degenerate noblesse, which had long outlived its best qualities, and had but a poor future before it. The ecclesiastical chronicler naturally finds the explanation of this disaster in the indifference of the age to religion, and can ill digest the fact that the nobility has succumbed to a pack of commoners.[3] At the same time, he laments their declension, and is acute enough to see that victory can never come to those who, as men, are unworthy of it.

It is a sad commentary on the factiousness that had preyed on France that this disaster was welcomed at Paris, where Burgundy was again erelong in the ascendant, as a triumph by the opponents of the Armagnacs. Burgundy's henchmen, the Cabochiens, used their butchers' knives with such terrible effect that fifteen hundred of these Armagnacs, the count himself among the number, were massacred.[4]

[1] Isambert, vii. 400.

[2] "Il estoit vaillant conquerant et saige en fait de guerre" (Pierre de Fenin, p. 196).

[3] "Regni nobilitas aggregata multis pecunialibus tanquam vile mancipium proh dolor redimenda, aut ignobilis gladiis succubunt pereunda" (Chron. de Charles VI., v. 562).

[4] Chron. de Charles VI., vi. 229 *et seq.*, 418; Pierre de Fenin, 92-97; Monstrelet, iv. 97-100.

Party spirit, and the license of the brigand bands, swelled by the peasants, who left the plough in despair to seek refuge in the woods, and sallied out to pillage, filled the land with murder and every shocking atrocity.[1] Worse still, in its fury at the assassination of Burgundy, the following year, which embittered the party strife beyond hope of conciliation, Paris joined[2] the young Duke Philip in accepting the Treaty of Troyes[3] (21st May 1420). The treaty made Henry V. of England, who was married to Charles' daughter, Catherine, regent and prospective King of France. Henry as virtual sovereign of France, or rather of northern France (for France south of the Loire clave to the Dauphin Charles[4]), was a vast improvement[5] on any of the Valois kings, with the exception of Charles V. He ruled vigorously, and checked disorder for a time,[6] but even a Henry V. could not have permanently succeeded in forcing the anti-national policy of Edward III. on a people which, even in misfortune, intestine and foreign, hardly paralleled in national story, had preserved its national spirit. Behind the Loire the Armagnacs rallied to the Dauphin, and this time the Armagnacs represented a national, instead of a factious cause. There was still a France to fight for, Scottish allies, too, to help patriotism in the struggle, and the death of Henry at Vincennes on the 31st August 1422, followed a few weeks later by that of poor, "much beloved".[7] Charles, gave patriotism at last a chance of success.

Charles' biography forms melancholy reading, is in fact one of the saddest of royal biographies, and the melancholy envelops the history of his reign. His reign, like his life, is full of shadow, and even yet oppresses the mind of the student with its sadness. Politically factious, superficial, petty, it is morally threadbare, grossly materialist, without the depth of soul that nurtures greatness of individuality. "The French," laments the chronicler, who feels isolated in his cell, not merely from the world, but from moral, spiritual, intellectual inspiration, "have no other God than their belly." Corruption has spread from the higher orders to the lower.

[1] See Chron. de Charles VI., vi. 64 *et seq.*; cf. 88-90, 170.

[2] *Ibid.*, vi. 368-378; Monstrelet, iv. 224-227. [3] Isambert, viii. 633-641.

[4] The eldest, Louis, Duke of Guienne, had meanwhile debauched himself to death, and the second had, according to popular belief, been poisoned (Chron. de Charles VI., vi. 60).

[5] See his character in *ibid.*, vi. 380-382.

[6] "Le roy Henri . . . mout faisoit tenir justice redement; par quoi le povre peuple l'aimoit mout sur tous autres" (P. de Fenin, 182; cf. Monstrelet, iv. 410, 411).

[7] "Mout fut le roy Charles amé de son peuple toute sa vie et pour ce on le nommoit Charles-le-bien-amé" (P. de Fenin, 191).

Fraud, cheatery, avarice, intrigue are everywhere. The bishops give a shocking example of worldliness and corruption. They are, in ecclesiastical phrase, dogs who cannot bark, anoint their heads with the oil of the sinner, abandon the sheep to the raging wolves, are guilty of simony, are filthy livers, flatterers of princes, never speak the truth. And what could be expected but disaster when the nobility are plunged in sensuality, given to delicate and frivolous living, and possessed by the devil of contention? No need, therefore, to have recourse to the prognostications of lying astrologers who prate of the conjunction of certain planets and stars in explication of these evil days. Withal the picture is one of the complete demoralisation of the higher orders.[1] The picture is equally sad when we turn the camera on the people. The low state of clerical morality is reflected in the stories of the drunkenness and profligacy of the priests, and these stories are not mere popular hearsay, but the depositions taken in the local courts. That the priest gets drunk at the tavern, lives in open violation of his vow of celibacy, abducts by night some hussy of a nun to his presbytery, seduces even the wives of his parishioners, is palpable enough from the records of the bailie courts.[2] These records reveal the moral anarchy of the age, for rape, adultery, abduction, murder, mutilation, brigandage, are common crimes. Every class has its criminals, even the highest, for many of the nobles are brigands and leaders of brigands who infest roads and woods, and know no law but that of force. Civilisation, religion, law, are banished from a land where the king's justice is flouted, where the population is but a tenth of what it should be, where even the churches are robbed of their sacred furniture, and where murder can be atoned for by a month's imprisonment, a few masses, or a charitable donation. It is a sickening tale of villany, bestiality, and misery, whose details the pen refuses to write. Charles VI. might be king, but evidently the devil reigned in France throughout the greater part of these forty years of anarchy.[3]

Patriotism was sore tried in the first years of the reign of Charles VII. The defeats of Crevant and Verneuil seemed the finishing strokes to French independence. Still more disheartening was the apathetic conduct of Charles himself, who was the mere tool of his worthless courtiers. Charles was in truth at this stage a very poor

[1] Chron. de Charles VI., v. 576-580.

[2] See, for examples, Pièces Inédites relatives au Regne de Charles VI., tom. ii.

[3] For details see, besides the chroniclers, Pièces Inédites. Juvenal des Ursins in his harangue to the States-General at Tours in 1433, gives a harrowing picture of the state of the country. See Recueil des États Généraux, ix. 134.

king to fight for, but he was after all rightful king and representative of France, though his enemies might contemptuously call him "the King of Bourges." Like his grandfather, he had no love of camps, no fighting instinct, and was altogether the wrong man in the wrong place. "He never took arms willingly, and had no liking for war, if he could at all avoid it."[1] Very admirable, if only Charles had not been robbed of one-half of his kingdom by the English invader, and hard beset to keep what remained. He had other good qualities, which might have done him credit in time of peace—his father's affability, his commiseration for the poor. But he was indolent, voluptuous, listless, aimless, could initiate nothing, and was ill fitted to be even the instrument of others, more capable and enterprising than himself, like Richemont and Dunois. No man ever seemed less destined to fill the *rôle* of hero, or deserve the title of "The Victorious." Yet Charles' reign is full of the heroic and the romantic. The heroism, the romance came from the people, not from the king, and made the king a romantic hero, in spite of himself. For the people, after all, in the person of Jeanne Darc, there is no selfish faction to serve, as for its rulers these forty years past. There is only France, and France, in the seraphic imagination of Jeanne Darc, means the legitimate, sacred monarchy. The monarch, the State, is raised, on the high flight of a mystic aspiration, out of the mire of sordid faction into the atmosphere of religion.[2] In thus elevating it, Jeanne Darc gave it a new force, a psychical afflatus that proved too much for the brute force of the English invader. The breakdown of the Anglo-Burgundian alliance[3] doubtless helped materially, but the moral influence of an inspired soul was none the less a potent factor[4] in working out the salvation of France, in an age predisposed by its superstitious beliefs to yield itself to it. Faith is greater than force, sometimes at any rate. To Jeanne the kingship

[1] P. de Fenin, 195.

[2] "Si se disoit être pucelle inspirée de la grace divine, et qu'elle etoit envoyée devers icilui roi pour le remettre en la possession de son royaume, dont il etoit enchassé et debouté à tout" (Monstrelet, v. 211).

[3] Monstrelet, v. 25-30. As seal of this alliance Bedford, regent for Henry VI. in France, married the sister of the Duke of Burgundy, and the alliance was supported by the Duke of Brittany.

[4] "Si étoient toutes ses paroles du nom de Dieu. Pourquoi grand' partie de ceux qui la vioient et oyoient parler avoient grand' crédence et variation qu'elle fût inspirée de Dieu, comme elle se disoit être" (Monstrelet, v. 211, 212). "Jeanne la Pucelle acquit en icelles besognes si grand' louange et renommée qu'il sembloit à toutes gens que les ennemis du roi n'eussent plus puissance de resister contre elle" (*Ibid.*, v. 229). Cf. Mémoires concernant la Pucelle, Petitot, t. viii. 150 *et seq.*

is a religious belief, in spite of its worthless holder, and she succeeded in intensifying this belief in the sacred, divinely appointed monarchy, and in herself, as its divinely appointed saviour, by the deliverance of Orleans. The coronation at Reims on the 17th July 1429,[1] set the seal of Heaven on the brow of Charles as the sacred servant of God, as well as King of France. It is an exaggerated idea, doubtless, that of a poor creature invested, by priestly incantation and the sacred oil, with an office which he really owes to the good sword of his remote ancestors. The superhuman character of this sorry royal personage is, indeed, based on a false tradition, which passes as history. What does a rustic imaginative girl of eighteen know of history or of theology? But faith feeds on exaggerations and makes history to suit itself. That Charles VII. is, at this stage, more than a very mediocre individual, in spite of feminine exaggerations—a complete nonentity with the crown on his head,—is not palpable to reason. In a more critical age Jeanne would have been laughed at or pitied as an enthusiast, a religious visionary, of unhinged mind, if of poetic, high-toned soul. For a time Charles and his court were, in fact, disposed to laugh,[2] and it was only her persistent intensity that imparted some measure of faith and exertion to the listless, apathetic king. The people, at all events, felt no hesitation. In an age sunk in superstition, racked with misery, ready to believe in any phantasy that will bring it temporal salvation, criticism is ridiculous. Even the orthodox doctors of Poitiers, who scent heresy and the black art, collapsed[3] before the simple, but impassioned earnestness and honesty of one whose patriotism is religion, and whose religion is patriotism. The important thing, then, for the present is not whether Jeanne is crazy or not (important only to historians and psychologists), but that she sees in Charles the sacred successor of St Louis, and works, besides other miracles which strengthen her power over the popular imagination, but which we need not take seriously, the miracle of a national regeneration. In spite of this, she found herself, as in the case of many ideal spirits who mingle in the rough work of practical politics, abandoned in the end to defamation, contempt, and a martyr's death—abandoned by the selfish, ease-loving, superficial king, whom she had saved, but for whom she could not work the miracle of a moral regeneration, to the brutal mercies of the English and her orthodox persecutors. Charles relapsed into the lethargy of his poor nature and the toils of his worthless favourites,

[1] Isambert, viii. 749, 750.

[2] "La tenoit on comme une folle devoyée de sa santé" (Monstrelet, v. 211).

[3] *Ibid.*, v. 212.

and Jeanne, to his great relief, was taken captive at Compiègne, by the Burgundians, and burned at Rouen by the English. In spite of martyrdom and calumny, France clung to her memory, felt the inspiration of her spirit, while the invaders lost in the Regent Bedford the only leader capable of retrieving their cause, lost definitely, too, the support of Burgundy, who in 1435 made his peace with Charles,[1] and could make no headway against the Constable Richemont and the Count de Dunois. Paris at last, in the spring of 1436, saw, with patriotic enthusiasm, the English march away, and Charles enter his capital as conqueror and king. The endless war sputtered on, indeed; faction, too, led by the Dauphin Louis, the Dukes of Bourbon, Alençon, Orleans, threatened to suck the nation once more into the vortex of civil war and feudal anarchy. Fortunately Charles, inspired to some extent by the influence of another woman of a very different type, Agnes Sorel,[2] at last shook off his favourites and his lethargy, and co-operated with energetic and patriotic men like the Constable and the merchant prince, Jacques Cœur, in the work of military organisation and administrative reform. With them co-operated the nation itself, as represented by the States-General of Languedoil, convoked at Orleans in 1439, and the permanent and well-disciplined force which it placed at the king's disposal, enabled him to put down the oppression of a brigand soldiery and to win back the remnants of the English conquests in Normandy and Guienne by the capture of Cherbourg in 1450, and Bordeaux in 1453.[3]

It was high time that the tide turned, if France was not to be depopulated out of existence. What with the ravages of contending armies, which lived by pillage, the ravages of the brigands who plundered and murdered both sides, the failure of the harvest in 1437-38, followed by famine and pestilence, it is a marvel how human nature survived at all the experiences of these terrible years of Charles' incipient reign. Paris, which alone lost 50,000 victims of the plague, was deserted, and its grass-grown streets were infested by wolves which devoured the children abandoned by their terror-stricken parents.

Charles' title of the Victorious was not inapt, though the merit of winning victories was not his, but that of the Maid of Orleans, the Constable, Dunois, and other able captains. In the struggle against the pretensions of another alien domination—that of the

[1] Treaty of Arras, Isambert, viii. 810.

[2] See Mémoires de Du Clercq, Petitot, xi. 46.

[3] See Mémoires de Jacques du Clercq in Petitot, t. xi., livre premier, second, et troisième; cf. Chronique de Mat. D'Escouchy, i. 316, 317, and ii. 76.

Pope—he acted a similar patriotic part. The struggle was a very old one, for the Gallican Church had never submitted to the absolute claims of the Pope, and held tenaciously to its liberties and privileges as a National Church. The conflict between Philip and Boniface had intensified the consciousness of its rights, and it was left to Charles VII. to carry that conflict to its legitimate conclusion. Philip had asserted his independence of Rome in matters of State; Charles went the length of limiting the papal authority over the French Church, in favour of that of the king, as well as in confirmation of its inherited rights. The circumstances were favourable to this fresh triumph of monarchy over Papacy, for the Pope and the Church, as represented by the Council of Basle (1431-43), were once more engaged in deadly quarrel over the question of reform in head and members, which Eugenius IV. desired to shirk, and of the superiority of the Council, which he resisted. Charles, in return for the support of the Fathers of Basle as against Henry VI. of England, favoured their contentions. At his instigation an assembly of the Gallican clergy, which met at Bourges in 1438, and at which the Council was represented, accepted the greater part of the reforming decrees of Basle. These were promulgated by his authority under the title of the Pragmatic Sanction, after the model of that ascribed to St Louis. This declaration went, however, far beyond that of Louis IX., in its assertion of the rights of the Gallican Church. It began by asserting the supreme authority[1] of a General Council over the Church, claimed the ancient right of election to ecclesiastical dignities, denied the papal claim to reservations, forbade appeals to Rome except in major causes, abolished annates (subject to the partial payment thereof during the lifetime of Eugenius), and enacted various regulations bearing on worship and discipline. The French Church was evidently far on the road to reformation, if not of doctrine, at any rate of polity and practice. Ultramontanism received at Bourges almost as rude a blow at the hands of Charles VII. as it was to receive a century later, at Westminster, at the hands of Henry VIII. The most important feature of the transaction is however, not explicitly stated in this declaration. The Pragmatic Sanction is memorable for what it assumed as much as for what it stated. The king has tacitly taken the Pope's place; he is virtual head of the Church; he has succeeded in subordinating the ecclesiastical to the royal authority. This assumption marks an immense step in advance in the growth of that authority, and though Charles

[1] "Potestatem a Christo habet immediate cui quilibet cujuscunque status . . . etiamsi papalis obedire tenetur" (Isambert, ix. 15, 16).

successors might treat the Pope, on occasion, in the spirit of compromise, they were not slow to improve the advantages to the Crown thus secured.

Another assembly, that of the States-General, which met at Orleans in the following year (1439), contributed materially to increase the political power of the Crown, by a second Pragmatic Sanction,[1] dealing with secular affairs. It established a standing army, which was ultimately fixed at 9,000 mounted men and supplemented by a force of infantry,[2] and made the king the head of this army. It decreed, in fact, a national force in the modern sense, controlled, paid, disciplined, directed by the king, and bound to yield him absolute obedience. The motive was not consciously to create an absolute master of the State by placing at his disposal a formidable body of armed men, bound to obey him and none other. The motive was the repression[3] of the armed anarchy of the brigand bands, born of this long and iniquitous war, which gave free scope to their lawless passions in pillage and murder. But its tendency was none the less to make the monarch absolute master of the State, especially as the Estates granted a subsidy or *taille* for the support of this force, which the king might continue to raise without their mandate,[4] and debarred the feudal nobility from raising money, or seizing the taxes for their own aggressive purposes. And if he might levy a *taille* for the maintenance of the army, without the intervention of the Estates, why not other *tailles* as well? Charles did not hesitate to draw this conclusion under the plea of the urgency of State affairs, and in spite of protests against his arbitrary procedure. He ended by claiming and practising the right to raise taxes at his pleasure,[5] and taking the assessment out of the hands of the officials elected by the people and

[1] Isambert, ix. 58: "Le roy par l'advis . . . des gens d'eglise, nobles, et gens des bonnes villes . . . a faict et estably par loi et edict general, perpetuel, et non revocable, par forme de pragmatique sanction," etc.

[2] See *ibid.*, ix. 169-174; cf. 270-273, which reorganises the feudal army and regulates pay and equipment, etc.

[3] "Pour obvier et donner remède à faire cesser les grands excez et pilleries faites et commises par les gens de guerre," etc.

[4] This is not expressly stated in the ordinance, but it is clear that Charles was not obliged to have recourse to the Estates for the renewal of this grant.

[5] This he expressly stated to an assembly at Nevers in 1441. Isambert, ix. 99-113: "Quant aux tailles le roy . . . le peut mettre sus, ce qu'autre que lui ne peut faire sans son congé. Et n'est jà nul besoin d'assembler les trois etats pour mettre sus les dites tailles." The assembly of the Estates, he continues, is only a source of expense to the people, and many of the barons have in fact advised him to cease convoking them, on this account, and are quite content "qu'on envoye la commission aux esleuz selon le bon plaisir du roy."

placing it in the hands of officials appointed by himself. He was the first king to do so as a matter of right, for hitherto the king was theoretically dependent for any revenue, beyond the proceeds of the royal domain, on the consent of the people. Though the States-General continued to protest against this usurpation when they got the chance, which was but very rarely, the usurpation passed into the category of royal prerogative. The only remaining check on royal absolutism, in matters of taxation, was the right of the Provincial Estates to deliberate on and diminish the quota of the *taille* demanded by the king.[1] As head of the Church, head of a permanent army, subject to his exclusive control, arbitrary assessor of taxes, Charles VII. was practically unlimited master of France. He was thus the founder of the modern French monarchy—absolute king *de facto*, if not *de jure*,—and his successors would know how to transform fact into right.

Charles performed his functions as absolute king with a fair amount of credit, according to the testimony of the statute-book, which contains several measures of a reforming character. Witness "the ordinances for the reformation of justice,"[2] which regulated the procedure of the courts, supreme and local, prohibited judicial commissions, forbade the judges to accept presents, etc. There are, too, meritorious financial measures, such as those annulling alienations of the royal domain, and those intended to secure both king and people against corruption in the administration of the revenue.[3] Such measures were no mere index of good intentions, as in the case of so many of those which had added to the bulk of the statute-book for one hundred years, without guaranteeing even the semblance of good government. Although Charles sacrificed Jacques Cœur, one of his reforming ministers, to the hostility of the noble lords to whom his burgher birth was an offence,[4] he did not allow the parasite tribe of the court to stultify his work by their greed and their prodigality. Nor did he hesitate to strike at aristocratic treason, and thus safeguard the people from the bane of faction. Witness the sentence of death against the Duke of Alençon, and of banishment against the Count of Armagnac in punishment of their treasonable intrigues.[5] To

[1] See, for instance, the deliberations of the States of Languedoc which grant 116,000 livres, instead of 130,000 demanded by the king (Isambert, ix. 278 *et seq*).

[2] Isambert, ix. 202-254, April 1453. [3] See *ibid.*, ix. 47-51 and 120-129.

[4] Mémoires de Du Clercq (Pet. xi.), 43, 44; Chronique de M. D'Escouchy, ii. 280-289: "Il fut envyé de pluseurs grans seigneurs autour du roy." The author says that he was "de petite generacion."

[5] See Isambert, ix. 341 and 365. Cf. Chronique de M. D'Escouchy, ii. 318-324 and 357-360, and iii. 112-143.

this comparatively vigorous administration France owed its recovery in some measure from the exhaustion and the suffering of fully a century. Agriculture and commerce throve once more under the protection of a king who afforded security of life and property, and brought back the novel *régime* of law and peace. The higher interests of the people had, too, some share of the royal attention, if we may judge from the re-establishment of the University of Caen,[1] and the efforts to suppress the secret societies of "the Vaudois," who met, according to the Grand Inquisitor of Arras, to worship the devil, and practise the most disgusting debauchery.[2]

This is the good side of the later reign of Charles VII. But if it brought the novel boon of peace, justice, and prosperity to the people, it did not bring happiness to Charles himself. His last years were clouded by the bitter feud with the Dauphin Louis, who set his authority at defiance in his government of Dauphiné, and carried his unfilial obstinacy to the length of seeking and securing the protection of the Duke of Burgundy, at whose court he spent five years of undutiful and voluntary exile. The fear of this rebellious son shortened the life of Charles, who, with a touch of his father's madness, persisted in his belief in a conspiracy to poison him, and consequently starved himself into an untimely grave (22nd July 1461). "At the news of his death," says the chronicler,[3] "there was much sorrow and lamentation, for well and sagely had he, in his time, governed his people, and preserved them in peace and prosperity."

With the reign of Charles closed a tragic century and a half of French history. At the commencement of that period the throne was occupied by a forcible king, independent of the Pope, supreme over the feudal nobility, concentrating in himself the power and energy of the kingdom, through the hierarchy of lawyers and officials, which had grown up around the throne. At its close the throne is again strong, nay, stronger than ever. But what an interval of misgovernment, bloodshed, desolation, misery; and at what cost has France preserved its independent kingship, its national existence! That long interval is an epoch of crime, gigantic crime for which Edward III. is largely responsible, as the initiator of the policy of force and usurpation, which plunged a nation into indescribable calamity for four generations. No doubt Philip VI. coveted Edward's French possessions, as Edward coveted his crown; patronised, too, Edward's Scottish enemies, as, however, he was by

[1] Isambert, ix. 198-201.

[2] Mémoires de Du Clercq (Pet. xi.), 62 *et seq.*, and Chronique de D'Escouchy, ii. 416-421.

[3] Chronique de Mat. D'Escouchy, ii. 422.

treaty as well as interest held bound to do; and had, therefore, his share of the responsibility. Doubtless, too, Edward's Anglo-French territories were incompatible with a united France, and would, in any case, most probably have sooner or later given rise to war between France and England. Considering the trend of modern history towards the national unity of kindred territories, it may be regarded as certain that no English king could permanently have held sway in south-western France. But that an English king imagined that he could not merely retain his French possessions, but conquer France, was pure folly. If England could not conquer even Scotland, what presumption to assume that it could subjugate France. What madness to dream that it could subjugate both France and Scotland. So viewed, the Hundred Years' War is one of the most insensate enterprises on record. And viewed in its baneful consequences to four generations of Frenchmen, it is one of the most terrible of royal crimes as well. The story of this most criminal warfare is truly a most brutal story, relieved by few episodes of heroism and grandeur. All through it we see the melancholy spectacle of a people victimised by kingly ambition, presumptuous *bravoure*, brute force. Nay, the invader is not even fighting for an idea, like the Crusaders, but for spoil, and the mere pleasure of warlike adventure. And what increases the guilt of this crime, in addition to its being an outrage on humanity by kingly ambition and heartless militarism, is the fact that the war was as much against the grain of the English people as it was hateful to France. The direct cost to England was indeed far less than to France, for it was after all war in the enemy's country; yet the cost in grinding taxation, in misgovernment, in the disorganisation of commerce and agriculture, was felt by generation after generation of Englishmen as an intolerable burden and grievance, which barren victories could not repay, and ultimate disaster only made more embittering. It was a war waged by mad kings as much against their own people as against a foreign enemy. What it was to France we have occasionally seen from the grim pages of the chroniclers who enable us to form a harrowing, but still insufficiently realistic idea of its horrors. It is enough to say that it was one long agony of one hundred and sixteen years. And that agony was inflicted, not merely by the English armies, which devoured and wasted France over and over again, in accordance with the canons of a barbarous militarism; it was intensified by the incapacity, the misgovernment of several generations of worthless rulers, who, with the exception of Charles V., knew not and often cared not how to vindicate their title to rule by good govern-

ment, who set themselves against every attempt of the nation to work out its own temporal salvation, and who finally triumphed because the nation could not be pillaged and defeated into submission, in spite of their impotence and the victories of the invader. It was a strange triumph, never less deserved by royalty, never more deserving of royal gratitude to the people. And yet the kingship emerged in the hands of Charles VII. practically unlimited in power, victorious over the alien, master of the nation. The great feudal nobility had dashed itself in pieces in the service of a kingship which triumphed in their destruction. There remained, it is true, the powerful princes of the blood—the associates of the *Praguerie*—to give trouble both to Charles VII. and Louis XI., but their pretensions had no longer the layer of the old feudalism to take firm root in. Democracy, too, had had its opportunity, and had failed to improve it. Democracy was paralysed for centuries to come. The nation had preserved its existence, had grown into a solid unity, welded into harmony in the cruel mould of suffering—the only redeeming features of the barbarous conflict. But it had lost its power,—what power it had in the functions of the States-General,—and had seen its aspirations after constitutional government perish by the blight of faction. The absolute king, the standing army, the national unity were the practical fruits of the struggle. The national unity was a permanent fact; it remained to be seen whether the absolute monarchy would survive reaction and prove its title to an equal permanence.

SOURCES OF THIS CHAPTER.—Isambert, Recueil Général, tomes vi., vii., viii., ix.; Chronicon Karoli Sexti, published in the series of the Documents Inédits by M. L. Bellaguet, under the title of Chronique du Religieux de Saint-Denys (1380-1422), 6 vols.; Mémoires de Pierre de Fenin (1407-1427), edited by Mdlle. Dupont for the Société de l'Histoire de France from a more complete MS. than that used by Petitot in tom. vii. of his Collection (premier serie); Froissart's Chroniques from 1380 to 1400, edited by Lettenhove; Histoire de Messire Jean de Boucicaut, Marshal of France, in Petitot, tom. vi. and vii. (1368-1408), which is, however, chiefly a narrative of the marshal's exploits outside France; Chroniques de E. de Monstrelet (1400-1445), which begin where Froissart left off, in Buchon's Collection, tomes 26-32, and in M. L. Douët-D'Arcq's edition for the Société de l'Histoire de France; Histoire de Charles VI. in Michaud and Poujoulat's Collection, tom. ii.; Choix de Pièces Inédites relatives au Regne de Charles VI., edited for the Société de l'Histoire de France by D'Arcq, 2 vols.; Procès de Condemnation et de Réhabilitation de Jeanne D'Arc, edited for the Société de l'Histoire de France par Jules Quicherat, 5 vols.; the Memoirs in Petitot, tom. viii.; Chronique de Mathieu D'Escouchy (1444-1461), edited by G. de Beaucourt for *ibid.*, 3 vols.; Mémoires de Jacques du Clercq (1448-1467) in Petitot, tom. xi.; Journal d'un Bourgeois de Paris (1405-1449), ed. Tuetey.

## CHAPTER IV.

### CONSOLIDATION OF THE MONARCHY BY LOUIS XI.—FAILURE OF REACTION UNDER CHARLES VIII. (1461-1498).

LOUIS XI. was thirty-eight years old when the tragic death of his father brought him a dignity, to which he had long impatiently aspired. If he had not, as Dauphin, learned the lesson of filial obedience, he had learned other lessons, which prepared him in some measure for the work of government.[1] He had been virtual sovereign of Dauphiné for ten years, for until 1456, when his father called him sharply to account for his insubordination, he had governed his large province as *de facto* king. He had coined money, levied taxes, created a parliament and a university, issued letters of nobility, and performed other acts of sovereignty, as if the Rhone had been the frontier of France, and Valence the capital of an independent State. He had had some experience of campaigning, and his practical acquaintance with the republican valour of the brave Swiss mountainers, in 1444, had taught him to beware of rash, aggressive enterprise with the sword. Even the five years of exile before his accession were not years of idleness. Work of some kind was a necessity of his restless nature, and this restlessness found scope, at Genappes, in intrigue—much of it, to his dishonour, against his own father.[2] At all events, it helped to complete the diplomatic education of the precocious and indefatigable politician.[3]

Outwardly there is no grandeur about Louis XI., no grandeur inwardly either, though he did great work of a kind. Never had so

[1] *Mémoires de Commines (Petitot)*, i. 405: "*Le travail qu'il eut en sa jeunesse, quand il fut fugitif de son père et fuit sous le Duc Philippe de Bourgogne, où il fut six ans, luy valut beaucoup.*"

[2] See, for instance, the treaty with the Duke of Milan in the Lettres de Louis XI., i. 326 *et seq.*

[3] The main sources for Louis' early history are his letters as Dauphin, edited by M. Charavay, and forming tome one of the six volumes published by Charavay and Vaesen for the Société de l'Histoire de France, and the first volume of Bazin's Histoire, edited by Quicherat for the same Society.

poor a figure appeared on the throne of France. On the occasion of his first entry into Abbeville, a man accosted the insignificant, mean-looking horseman with the question whether the king was coming? "I am the king," returned the horseman, whereat there was a roar of laughter from all the spectators at the joke, and the horseman had to run the gauntlet of the hisses and jibes of the crowd all the way through the street.[1] You might have taken him for some travelling quack, adds the historian, who, however, is no impartial judge. King Philip or King John would certainly not have recognised their descendant and successor in the small, thin, keen-eyed man, who wore, sometimes even on State occasions, the shabbiest coat and hat in the kingdom. "He had on a very short coat," says Commines, in recording his interview with the King of Castille, who was all magnificence, "and his dress, which was of homespun, could not have been worse. His hat was execrable."[2] No wonder that the Spanish grandees mocked, and the cavaliers of each side separated in the worst of humour. The day of the shining cavalier was past in France for the present, though it would return by-and-by with greater *éclat* than ever. Under this plebeian king, who wore homespun and chose his associates and his ministers from the middle class,[3] who made his barber a nobleman[4] and an ambassador, the cavalier had not only no power, which was gone or going for ever; he had not even the satisfaction of shining before the lieges in procession or on parade. Louis realised so little the glory of clothes—the glory of the Middle Ages (of modern ages too) to so large an extent—that he had an old doublet mended to save a new one, and wore his hat till it would have been refused as a present by an old clothes man. This might be unkingly, especially in the eyes of the master of the ceremonies, but it was significant. Not only was it afflicting to the fashionable tailor of those days and to mediæval gentlemen of fashion; it was very ominous for the grand seigneurs, who discovered that they could shine no longer in ermine and gold, and must do some serviceable work for these privileges, or reserve themselves and their finery for their ancestral halls. Still less was there a chance of living in profusion at court at the people's expense, even if the grand seigneur could dispense with the shining attire of a mediæval gentleman of fashion. Louis, to his sorrow, proved a niggardly king, except for purposes of State, when money could secure the satisfactory development of some

[1] Bazin, iii. 166, 167.

[2] Mémoires, i. 480.

[3] "Il estoit naturellement ami des gens de moyen éstat et ennemy de tous grands qui se pouvoient passer de luy" (Commines, i. 402).

[4] Isambert, x. 693.

diplomatic trick.[1] Meanness in clothes and money is no indication of elevation of soul, but it is preferable to the heartless prodigality of shining reigns, both ancient and modern, in which the king is master of parade, but in no other respect master of his art.

Louis, who was to be a model of dissimulation and patience on the throne—prototype of "The Prince"—was at first all impetuosity. His sagacity could not bridle his vindictiveness towards his father's ministers and officials, whom he dismissed and persecuted,[2] and his haste to be supreme. He had learned some things in opposition and exile, but not enough,—had not learned to reckon on the reaction that such a reign as that of a Charles VII. tends to brew. He began as a violent revolutionist, to the astonishment and indignation of the magnates whose interests he had espoused as Dauphin, but whom he remorselessly trampled on as king. That he did ultimately succeed in working a revolution was not due to his impatience, but to the subtlety and self-restraint begotten of the experiences of his incipient reign. It was a revolution achieved by craft, temporising, ability to wait, learn, and work.[3] His haste to be absolute master of France very nearly ruined him. The work of his father had not had time to solidify; to build straightway on that shaky foundation, and not on his own subtle genius, the structure of an absolute will was a risky procedure, which placed for a time both foundation and structure in jeopardy. He had professed his determination, at the sight of the misery of the people on the road from Genappes to Paris, to reform abuses,[4] and it looked as if he was impatient to get to work.

One of his first acts was to revoke and annul all alienations of the royal domain.[5] He thus struck at the interest of the large number of persons who really lived at the nation's expense, the domain being a main source of revenue. This might be laudable, but it was arbitrary and imprudent. The interest of the clergy received an almost equally rough blow in the diminution of the number of clerical lawyers in the Parliament of Paris.[6] Here again the motive was the laudable one of the better administration of justice, which seemed to have found in Louis an ardent protector. The Church had more reason to complain of the revocation of the Pragmatic

[1] "Et ceux qu'il avoit chassez et deboutez en temps de pais et de prosperité, il les rachetoit bien cher quand il en avoit besoin" (Commines, i. 402); "mais surtout luy a servi sa grande largesse" (*Ibid.*, i. 403).

[2] Bazin, ii. 5-8; cf. 25-27.

[3] "Comme il se trouva grand et roi couronné, d'entrée ne pensa qu'aux vengeances, mais tot luy en vint le dommage, et quand et quand la repentance. Et repara cette folie et cette erreur" (Commines, ii. 405).

[4] Bazin, ii. 11. [5] Isambert, x. 386, 387. [6] *Ibid.*, x. 387, 388.

Sanction,[1] despite the lengthy and warm remonstrances of the Parliament.[2] The opinionated king paid no heed to the ill-will of either Church or Parliament, in his eagerness to obtain in exchange from the Pope the investiture of Naples for René of Anjou. In this expectation he was disappointed. The astute Æneas Sylvius gave the red hat to the Bishop of Arras, Louis' adviser in this business; he withheld the crown of Naples; and the revocation of the Pragmatic Sanction practically remained in abeyance, in consequence. The abrupt reversal of his father's ecclesiastical policy served all the same to rasp the loyalty, not only of Parliament and clergy, but of the nobles, to whom the right of free election to rich benefices meant merely the right to dispose of ecclesiastical patronage to their own profit. And what could possess a king who had the audacity to subject the privileged classes to the payment of the *taille*,[3] and to enjoin the higher ecclesiastics to furnish an account of the property acquired by mortemain![4] Oppressive fiscal edicts thus followed one another without respect of person or privilege.[5] To crown all, came the ordinance which deprived nobles and prelates of their rights of chase, under penalty of death and confiscation.[6] Nay, Louis had the effrontery to make a bonfire of the hunting gear of the Lord of Montmorency, by whom he had been hospitably entertained. Evidently he had resolved to rule with the saw rather than with the sceptre, and the saw both penetrated and lacerated the mass of abuses which tradition protected.

There was friction, too, with powerful vassals like the Duke of Brittany over the question of homage, and the Duke of Burgundy over the question of the ransom of the towns of the Somme. Though liegemen of the crown of France, Brittany and Burgundy were practically independent sovereigns. They were dukes by the grace of God equally with Louis himself, and in virtue of this fact, Brittany forbade appeal to the Parliament of the king, and refused to recognise the claims of the Crown in matters of internal administration as well as of homage.[7] Duke Philip of Burgundy was less obstreperous on the question of homage, had, in fact, after Louis' coronation, professed his fealty, and at length, in 1463, agreed to cede the Somme towns, which guaranteed the French frontier to the north, for 400,000 crowns.[8] The transaction was a great diplomatic triumph

[1] Isambert, x. 393-396. [2] *Ibid.*, x. 396-416. [3] *Ibid.*, x. 497-499.
[4] *Ibid.*, x. 464, 465. [5] Bazin, ii. 76-78. [6] Bazin, ii. 72-76.
[7] See, for instance, Isambert, x. 476; Bazin, i. 46, 47; Lettres de Louis XI., ii. 84.
[8] See Lettres de Louis XI., ii. 145, 146, and 152. They had been ceded to Philip of Burgundy by Charles VII., by the Treaty of Arras.

for Louis, creditable alike to his patriotism and his subtlety, but it aroused the hostility of Philip's son, Charles,[1] Count of Charolais, and was the beginning of the long and bitter conflict which disturbed the greater part of Louis' reign.

The resentment of Charles was the spark that exploded the mine under Louis' feet, the train of which had already been laid by the feudal magnates, ecclesiastical and secular, who formed themselves into the *Ligue du Bien Public*, or Association of the Commonweal. The association was none the less a caste movement, a reaction directed by the princes of the blood against the revolutionary policy of Louis, and exploited by the Dukes of Brittany, Bourbon, Alençon, Calabria, Nemours, the Counts of Armagnac, Dunois, and Dammartin, and others of Charles' disgraced ministers, for their own purposes. Its nominal head was the Duke of Berry, Louis' shiftless brother, whose name lent it a prestige which was half the battle. The real director was Charles of Burgundy, no despicable opponent at all events, as resourceful and active as he was impetuous, and likely to win the other half of the battle if any man could.

Louis tried to conjure the storm by explanations, appeals, vindications, promises. He appealed to facts and to the people, especially the towns, against his accusers, who laid stress on the disasters which his government had brought upon the kingdom, as a pretext for taking arms, and demanded the convocation of the States-General. Was it not a fact, he asked, that every one lived in security under his government, whether princes, ecclesiastics, nobles, burghers, merchants, peasants?[2] The towns were lukewarm and vacillating, and the people, groaning under the burden of the *tailles*, was inclined to trust to the professions of the would-be reformers. The movement was not, however, actuated by motives of political philanthropy. It was a conspiracy of the barons against the Crown, a crusade on behalf of feudal anarchy and oppression on the part of the princes and the greater magnates at least.[3] The Bishop of Lisieux, who undertook its defence, tried hard to prove that it was to some extent a laudable reaction against tyranny. He was more successful in advocating the rights of liberty and denouncing tyranny,

[1] See *Mémoires de Messire Oliver de la Marche* in Petitot's Collection, ii. 231, 232.

[2] For his answer to the accusations of the princes see the documents prefixed to Petitot's edition of Commines, tom. xi. 313-328. Cf. Lettres de Louis XI., ii. 230 *et seq.*

[3] Commines expressly states this: "Et fut cette guerre depuis appellée le *bien public* pour ce qu'elle s'entreprenoit soubs couleur de dire que c'estoit pour le bien public du royaume" (i. 342).

than in vindicating the character of its leaders, whose honesty and patriotism he was forced to call in question. Doubtless, the support of the people was due to the hatred of oppression and the aspirations after freedom, and the people at least could honestly appreciate the bishop's contention that to submit apathetically to tyranny is contrary to the teaching of both Scripture and history. The bishop's reasoning is admirable. He is the champion of liberty and reform. He draws a terrible picture of Louis' arbitrary and despotic *régime*, and contends rightly enough that a free nation ought not to submit to such lawless oppression, and that the justice of a cause should not be judged by its want of success.[1] The only question is whether such reformers would have worked out the salvation of the State, and vindicated the bishop's democratic principles as well as their own interests. The probability is that they would have launched France back into the chaos of princely faction and universal anarchy, from which Charles VII. had delivered it. Louis XI., with his drastic way of doing things, was at least better than this. The interests of the Crown might weigh more with him than the interests of the people, but he might fairly claim that justice and security were in safer keeping in the hands of a strong king, than in those of a host of petty local tyrants, who would impair the power of the Crown only to strengthen their own, and quarrel among themselves.

Louis' situation was at first desperate enough. One after another of the great vassals rose in arms, while Charles of Burgundy and the Duke of Brittany marched on Paris. Louis hastened northwards from his pursuit of the Duke of Bourbon,[2] to prevent the junction of the Burgundians and the Bretons near the capital. He attacked Charles at Montlhery (16th July 1465), but lost the advantage which his antagonist had attributed to him by retiring during the night.[3] Charles, who had unconsciously won a victory, gave away the fruits of it by neglecting to follow up his advantage, while Louis toiled day and night to increase his army.[4] Happily for him, Paris had refused to admit Charles, and now stood as firmly for the king as for the Burgundians forty years before. He lost Rouen, however, and most of the Norman cities, which espoused the side of the League. His answer to this was the revolt of the men of Liège,[5] which forced Charles to accept terms in order to be free to march against his father's democratic subjects. Louis' diplomatic skill, which enabled

[1] Bazin, ii. 105-114.

[2] See Lettres, ii. 286 *et seq.*

[3] Next day he claimed the victory: "Et fut la victoire pour nous" (Lettres, ii. 327).

[4] See Lettres, ii. 329 *et seq.*

[5] Isambert. x. 509-513.

him to play on the selfish interests of the Leaguist leaders, did the rest (Treaties of Conflans and St Maur, October 1465).[1] He was all generosity and obsequiousness. Each got what he wanted, and the League of the Commonweal, as the Bishop of Lisieux laments, forgot all about the reform of the State. The commission of thirty-six reformers, whose appointment it stipulated *pro forma*, was a mere cloak to hide the factious selfishness of its leaders.[2]

Louis had, of course, not the slightest intention of keeping his word. Honour and honesty were unknown to his code of royal morals, as they were for the most part to that of the Leaguist leaders. With the aid of the Duke of Brittany, he cheated his brother, the Duke of Berry, out of his appanage of Normandy, which he had agreed to confer on him, and forced him to seek refuge in Brittany,—cheated, too, his "dear son," Charles of Burgundy, with the specious offer of his daughter in marriage, and Champagne as dowry, while intriguing against him with the men of Liège, whom he inveigled a second time into revolt and then left in the lurch, after they had served his passing purpose. Then he entered on a subtle but fruitless intrigue against Charles at the court of Edward IV., after he had become, by the death of his father in 1467, Duke of Burgundy; attacked the Duke of Brittany in the hope of breaking the alliance of Burgundy, Brittany, and England; tacked once more in the face of the difficulties of the campaign, and professed again his paternal interest in Duke Charles at Peronne. Nay, finding himself in a trap from which even his subtlety could not extricate him without abject submission, he even helped him to butcher the men of Liège,[3] whom he had incited to revolt a third time, in spite of the cry of "Vive France," with which they greeted him from the walls. Reynard had been caught for once, and had to slink home with his tail very low. Even the parrots cried "Peronne" in derision of him.[4] It was a terrible punishment of falsity, which we cannot help enjoying, and would have been the death, for very shame, of any man with a spark of honour in his soul. But Louis could outlive these things, could survive the bitterness, not of being caught cheating, but of being cheated, beaten at his own game; beaten by that traitor Balue, and he a cardinal, too, whom he thrust into the iron cage of his own invention. He did not, however, allow his conscience to punish himself, for conscience he had none. He is under no obligation to keep faith with any one. He might except on occasion, in answer to the remonstrances of Edward IV. against his boundless mendacity, his royal word to a brother king, but he

[1] Isambert, x. 515-523. [2] Bazin, ii. 114-141. [3] See Lettres, iii. 289-291.
[4] Chron. de Jean de Troyes (Petitot, tom. xiii.), 384.

would have been a bold potentate indeed who would have unreservedly trusted himself to Louis' sincerity. As to his obligations to God, a few prayers and offerings could secure him against possible harm in that quarter; the harm, in the shape of retribution in this world and in purgatory, and not the moral offence, being his only solicitude.

His first move in a fresh course of diplomatic subterfuge was to declare himself, by advice of the Notables,[1] freed from the obligations of the Treaty of Peronne, and to pay back Duke Charles by a sudden inroad into Flanders. Charles, himself taken by surprise this time, was forced to an accommodation, and at once set to work to return the blow by forming a new League of the Commonweal, with Berry, now Duke of Guienne, for nominal leader once more,—to give, that is, as he said himself, half a dozen kings to France instead of one. Louis was again in sore trepidation, and made frantic efforts to frustrate the designs of his enemies by lying offers of the utmost magnificence. His offers were rejected, and another civil war gave expression to the anarchic genius of feudalism, and scope to the king's military and diplomatic talents. This time these talents triumphed unequivocally. The death of his brother,[2] of which Louis heard with a satisfaction greater perhaps than on the occasion of his father's decease eleven years before, removed the figurehead and focus of revolt, and paralysed the action of his associates. Duke Charles made, indeed, a devastating raid as far as Rouen in order to join forces with the Duke of Brittany, who never came, and then went home to turn his arms into another channel—the fatal channel of the rash and impossible conquest of the invincible Swiss. While his mad rashness prepared the way to tragic disaster, Louis' tortuous and false course led him to triumph.[3]

Charles embroiled in the mad policy of carving out an impossible Burgundian kingdom for himself with the sword, Louis had ample opportunity, in the midst of the task of helping diplomatically to hurry him to his doom, to deal with his recalcitrant magnates. One after another he struck them mercilessly down. The first to fall was the Count of Armagnac, whom he had recalled from banishment at the commencement of his reign,[4] and who had been one of the leading spirits of the League. The count had a sinister history, had married his own sister, and was not ashamed to father her children, and Louis made short shrift with so depraved and incorrigible a rebel, who was cut down by his men-at-arms at Lectoure in disregard of

[1] Isambert, x. 617-622.
[2] Lettres, iv. 325.
[3] Bazin, ii. 141-300.
[4] Lettres, ii. 13.

the stipulation of surrender.[1] Then came the turn of the Count o St Pol, the great magnate of the northern frontier and Constable o France, who was beheaded at Paris in 1475.[2] The next victim was of higher rank—the Duke of Alençon, who had also experienced the royal clemency on several occasions, and succumbed in his Parisian prison to the royal vengeance in 1476.[3] The Duke of Nemours was less fortunate, and expiated his treason on the scaffold in the following year,[4] to the great sorrow of the Bishop of Lisieux, who extols his virtues, and makes him out to be an honest patriot.[5] Thus, without respect of persons, even of royal blood, did Louis strike at his opponents, and only held his hand in the case of those whom, like the Duke of Bourbon, it was more prudent to buy over with pensions and places than to send to the scaffold. The Duke of Brittany, too, was left unscathed, but he was kept in respectful subordination by a large force on the Breton frontier, and the way was paved for the ultimate incorporation of the duchy by the recognition of the right of succession of the House of Blois. These and other executions—and they were many—formed a harsh object-lesson in obedience as well as in arbitrary methods, and liberty and justice had sometimes cause to put on mourning. All the same, most of these factious and selfish magnates, whether of princely or noble rank, had been guilty of treason over and over again, and had not succeeded by their honesty and public spirit in investing their treason with the substantial plea of fighting for the commonweal against the tyrant. The tyrant, therefore, though vindictive and arbitrary, did no harm to France in ridding it of these leaders of faction, or depriving them of the power of working mischief for the rest of his reign. The magnates were taught to become subjects instead of lieges, and for fully a century to come the Crown was to be undisputed master of magnate and nation. Not till the time of the Catholic League would feudalism dare to lift its mailed hand against the royal sceptre, except in isolated, spasmodic fashion; and as in the latter half of the fifteenth century it found its master in Louis XI., so in the latter half of the sixteenth it was to find its master in Henry IV. The process had begun which was to transform these petty sovereigns into a merely military caste, whose function was to fight the king's battles, not their own, and thus aid in extending the royal and national power, and lend splendour to the royal court.

[1] Bazin, ii. 300-304.
[2] *Ibid.*, ii. 375-378; Isambert, x. 727-730.
[3] *Ibid.*, iii. 172.
[4] Isambert, x. 777, 778.
[5] Bazin, ii. 393-396: "Vir profecta aequitate et iustitia atque probatissimis moribus egregius."

With faction destroyed by the executioner's axe, and Charles of Burgundy dead in a ditch at Nancy in January 1477, Louis was at last master of the situation. He could now pit his diplomacy and his undiluted strength against Charles' daughter, the Duchess Mary, whose hand he failed to secure for the Dauphin, and her gallant husband, Maximilian, from whom he succeeded in filching Artois and the Burgundian duchy. Other substantial acquisitions betray the hand of the master, whose will abashed feudalism no longer dared to dispute. Maine, Anjou, Provence were annexed to the crown, before whose lustre that of the great families paled into insignificance, and whose supremacy was no longer threatened by that fatal system of appanages which had nurtured feudal factiousness and civil strife, and which the States-General had condemned at Tours in 1468. In these last six years of Louis' reign, France regained a prestige which it had ceased to inspire for a century and a half—a prestige which kept the English in check, intimidated Pope Sixtus IV., inspired the friendship of Scotland, Switzerland, Portugal, Castille, Hungary, and vaunted the protection of Milan, Savoy, Florence, Genoa, Gueldres, Navarre.[1]

Was this triumph an unmixed good for France, present and future? This question involves another that starts up at every great transitional period. Was the new order preferable to the old? The modern to the mediæval conception of government and society? Those who hold that it was will see in the work of Louis XI., if not perhaps in Louis himself, much to approve. To enforce anew the controlling power of the Crown against mediæval anarchy was a most notable feat, of which Louis deserves the full credit. The power of privileged princes and nobles was, as we have amply enough learned, incompatible with political order. It bred faction, civil war, anarchy, the political disorganisation which reached its climax in the reign of Charles VI. Nor were these privileges compatible with social progress. Individual nobles might not be hostile to social emancipation, and might even give their serfs some of the rights of free men.[2] Feudalism, as a system, was, and social progress had a far better chance under the auspices of a *powerful* king than under those of a powerful aristocracy. It was at least his interest, if not his principle, to patronise the middle and lower classes as against the higher, and bring to some extent the forces of order and equity to bear on the life of the people. It might have been far better had the people been able to do this for themselves, and control both

[1] See Mémoires of Comines, ii. 389, 390.

[2] See, for examples, Thierry, Essai sur l'Histoire du Tiers État, 71, 72.

king and magnates, but in France, as elsewhere, the people had failed to create or vindicate constitutional liberty and government. This was the function of time, and if Louis really worked against time in this matter, he worked at all events in favour of centralisation as against anarchy and contradiction, and thus contributed materially to energise the nation. This was a great achievement of statesmanship, and a very able statesman Louis undoubtedly was, if not, in moral respects, a model one. The revolutionist, who accomplishes a great political or social transformation, is hampered by his task, and must be judged in connection therewith. For such, to do or not to do, is the supreme question, and only the truly great man can solve the question satisfactorily. Nay, even the truly great man in a revolutionary age fails to do so in all respects. He is forced at times to sacrifice morality to circumstances. Now, Louis XI. was not a great man, though a great statesman after his kind. He had his own way of doing things, often a mean, heartless, feline, brutal, arbitrary, despicable way. His way is hateful to the moral sense, and has been severely judged, both by contemporaries and by posterity. Only let us not forget that it was difficult for such a personality to rise to greatness in his methods, that he did good and great work in spite of his methods, and that the exemplification of such greatness would have been a herculean task in the circumstances. While admitting this, there is still too much ground for adverse criticism of the man, his methods, his system. It is to his everlasting dishonour that he preferred the tortuous to the straight road, took pleasure in cheating, regarded proficiency in falsity and mendacity as the merit and the mark *par excellence* of the great politician. Even Commines damns him with faint praise at times, and this is very significant on the part of such a critic, who was one of his ministers, and owed him many favours. He emphasises the ceaseless activity which consumed him like a fever, and made even his amusements—for example, the chase—a labour to himself and his friends.[1] He extols his love of work, his good sense, his chastity in later life (though this is a doubtful point), his extraordinary powers of endurance in the course of a career which was an incessant struggle with opposition, and which he might have rendered less arduous could he have been content to accomplish less and sacrifice his plans to his convenience. "I never saw him," says he, "without labour and care."[2] His intensity, his alertness, were such that he knew everybody and everything in his dominions (thanks partly to the institution of the post), and remembered everything connected with

[1] Mémoires, ii. 408, 410. [2] *Ibid.*, ii. 406.

his work. He was omniscient and omnipresent in affairs of State, even the smallest.[1] In this respect, "he was fitted to govern a world rather than a kingdom."[2] Yet, in spite of all the good he has to say of him, and the good he would fain place to his credit but cannot, he has to admit that the people was miserable under his *régime*, and did not love him or his government. "Better to be feared than loved," was one of his maxims, and he was both feared and hated.[3] And he cannot hide the fact that the king himself was the most miserable of all, the slave of his fears and suspicions, uneasy in his conscience by reason of superstition, afraid of death,[4] of which no one durst speak to him, knowing himself to be the object of universal detestation. It is a melancholy reflection on the utter want of sympathy with his subjects that Plessis-les-Tours, where he died, was virtually his prison, in which he surrounded himself with guards, and even barriers and towers—a sort of enlarged cage, type of those invented for the torture of his enemies. Taking even the most favourable view, we cannot avoid the suspicion that his striving was to depress the magnates in order to elevate himself, to make of himself a sort of solitary and universal feudal magnate, and that his rule was essentially egotistic.

He was too much of a politician to be an efficient administrator. He sacrificed the prosperity of the nation to the expansion of the State and the supremacy of the Crown. This increase of the power of the king and the greatness of France might be good policy. The first might ensure immunity from civil war to future generations, and this was a great gain; the second might energise France and contribute indirectly to the national development. But both had to be paid for, and to the generation over which Louis ruled, the cost was very heavy, without yielding much present advantage. The taxes rose nearly threefold. At the end of the reign of Charles VII. the annual revenue raised amounted to 1,800,000 livres; at the end of that of Louis it had risen to nearly 5,000,000.[5] The difference did not represent the increase of prosperity, due to an enlightened administration, for the poverty of the people was, according to Commines, not to speak of Bazin, whose testimony is not impartial, heartrending. It was the fruit of extortion, and if on the part of the king the extortion was due to political, not personal reasons, it was due on the part

[1] Mémoires, ii. 408: "Il retinoit toutes choses et cognoissoit tout le monde."
[2] *Ibid.*, ii. 408.
[3] "Ses subjects trembloient devant luy" (*Ibid.*, ii. 390). [4] *Ibid.*, ii. 398.
[5] Commines, ii. 301: "4,700,000 livres sans l'artillerie et autres choses semblables."

of many of his officials to corruption.[1] "He took all, and he spent all," says Commines. His predilection for unscrupulous agents, who paid themselves, according to opportunity, the wages which he left unpaid, was a blot not only on his political, but on his administrative *régime*. If he cultivated for political reasons the middle class, he did not display the solicitude of true sympathy for the welfare of the people. He cared for the State; he hardly cared for the people. He spent large sums in building or strengthening fortifications in defence of the kingdom, "he took from the poor to give to those who had no need of it."[2] His State affairs were costly, and the fabric of his power, which was the main consideration, was built on the oppression of the nation. The people even suffered in their pockets from his religiosity, for "he gave much to the churches" at its expense. The people bore it all, for tradition is mighty, and force still mightier. A time was to come when the people would not bear another Louis, who is the most striking antitype of Louis XI., viz., Louis XVI. From Louis XI. to Louis XVI., what a revolution in public opinion! He has been extolled as "the friend of the civic population,"[3] but this judgment shows little insight into the true trend of things. In reality, from the administrative point of view, he was an enemy in disguise. True, he fostered municipal and provincial rights and privileges, where they seemed compatible with the powers of the Crown, established several provincial parliaments for the more effective control of feudal anarchy, allowed the Provincial Estates to meet, turned even to the States-General in the embarrassment of the moment. Nevertheless, he was not the patron of liberty. Though he might patronise, he might also destroy it when it suited him. Commines, who had a better appreciation of both liberty and prosperity, advised him to consult the States-General, and take advantage of its co-operation in government. Louis preferred to rule alone—to encrust himself in his own egotism, which no warm breath of sympathy could break. If we could discover traces of such sympathy, we might be inclined to palliate the popular misery with the plea of his absorption in the task of fighting a host of enemies, internal and foreign, which left him little enough time for the work of administration. There was, indeed, some sign of better things after his triumph. He professed his resolution to turn over a new leaf and devote himself to the amelioration of abuses. The statute-book affords, too, some evidence of his interest in commerce[4] and

[1] Bazin, iii. 198.
[2] Commines, ii. 301.
[3] Ranke, History of France in the 16th Century, i. 101.
[4] Isambert, x. 428, 451, 484.

industry,[1] his efforts to prevent corruption[2] and maintain order and justice,[3] his encouragement of mining,[4] his desire to reform ecclesiastical discipline by enjoining the residence of prelates.[5] But good resolutions and even good laws are not satisfactory substitutes for an efficient administration. "During his reign," says Bazin,[6] "100,000 persons died of hunger in France, 100,000 more of disease engendered by want." It would be easy to multiply from the same source fact upon fact to constitute a terrible indictment of his government. The indictment would hardly be fair, as the facts are amassed by a bitter enemy. All the same Louis cannot claim a verdict of acquittal on the ground of missed opportunities and good intentions. A king, like other men, must be judged by his actions as well as his intentions. Death at least does not count with intentions and resolutions, and death surprised Louis before he had time to put the sincerity of his professions to the test of practice.

It is a grim picture that Commines draws of the misgovernment of his age, in France and elsewhere, and Commines was no theorist, but a practical statesman, who had been the participator in Louis' administration, and took to writing his memoirs in the leisure of enforced retirement from political life. He has not overmuch political virtue to spare, though even Commines has some place in the world for liberty and justice, and admires English parliamentary institutions. The principle of antagonism between contentious dynasties was, in his estimation, everywhere active, turning the world into a pandemonium and victimising the peoples. The peoples apparently had, for the most part, no distinct notion of the fact that government exists for them and not for a set of quarrelsome potentates. Doubtless this conviction was, as we have seen, present in the hearts of a few enlightened men, like the Bishop of Lisieux, but Philip de Commines was not a profound philosopher, and brought his camera to bear, for the most part, on court and camp, which seem for him to make up the sum of human history. The only reasonable explanation of this mystery of universal contention that he can find is, that God in the government of the world has ordained the principle of opposites to keep men in fear and humility. He thus rather naively explains the antagonism of Scotland and England, of England and France, of Spain and Portugal, and so forth. The evils that result from international strife are the divine punishment of kings and peoples. The knowledge of good, or the will to perform it, is not sufficient to preserve social and political order, and God,

[1] Isambert, x. 529. [2] *Ibid.*, x. 561, 685. [3] *Ibid.*, x. 609.
[4] *Ibid.*, x. 623. [5] *Ibid.*, x. 742. [6] iii. 170.

according to Philip de Commines, is constrained to rule the world by violent methods. His philosophy may be dubious, the facts he depicts are not so, and a grim indictment of the misgovernment and misery of the time they form. The misuse of force in the service of oppression by warring despots, the simulation of justice to attain unjust ends, the destruction of neighbouring States, whose only crime is that they are weak and afford a tempting prey to the aggressor, the traffic in Church benefices to satisfy the covetousness of favourites, the oppression of the people by taxes, without asking their consent, the ravages of a dissolute soldiery (in spite of military ordinances apparently) who still pay themselves by robbery and pillage—such are the more salient features of the situation, as envisaged by the ex-minister in retirement. What the ex-minister should have considered was the question, whether it was not a terrible commentary on the doings of potentates by divine grace, when government must be regarded in the light of a scourge of God! This awkward fact does not occur to him, and the only cure for the ills he depicts and laments is the fear of hell. If every bad governor were to remember that he would some day suffer the pains of hell for his misdeeds, the world would be more virtuous and better governed. Faith in God, particularly in purgatory, is the grand desideratum.[1] The day was to come when people, unacquainted with theology, and sceptical as to the efficacy of purgatory, would find a different antidote—the antidote of revolution.

Before the arch-enemy of feudalism had breathed his last at Plessis-les-Tours on the 24th August 1483, feudalism was already preparing the reaction which was the inevitable result of such a reign. The history of France during the Middle Ages is to a certain extent a history of reactions,—reactions both aristocratic and democratic against the monarchy. Democracy as well as aristocracy had periodically made its voice heard against abuses. It was no new force begotten of the oppression of Louis' *régime*, but it had always, as we have seen, been a failure. Paris was its nurse, excitable, fickle Paris,—Paris, which, as the Emperor Charles V. said, was "not a town, but a little world," the capital of extremes, ready at one moment to worship the majesty of power, the next to rush to its barricades and shoot his majesty's soldiers. But Paris at the end of the fifteenth century was not what it had been at the beginning. "The Parisians," says Marino Cavalli, the Venetian ambassador, "formerly enjoyed an almost democratic liberty, but as often happens, they did not know how to use it, and were guilty of divers acts of insolent disobedience

[1] Mémoires, ii. 290-311.

(in the opinion of the ambassador). They have thus been deprived under the last sovereigns (including apparently Louis XI.) of many of their privileges, and they are losing them more and more (this was in 1546). They can now make but little resistance to the monarch when he demands money, and they finish by paying, will they or not, all or nearly all that is asked."[1] At all events Paris has always had an instinct of liberty, a forceful impatience of misgovernment for the time being, and the Parliament of Paris had, during Louis' lifetime, made its voice heard against some of the royal edicts. But the Parliament, as a corporation with certain political functions, was far from being the pretentious and influential body of the following centuries,[2] and for it to attack the system of Louis would have been to beat the rock with a switch. But the States-General, cry the excited spirits of the capital! The States-General, re-echo the magnates from one end of the kingdom to the other! The States-General shall inaugurate the reaction in favour of justice and liberty! Considering the past history of France, justice and liberty were rather unfortunate in their patrons. Justice and liberty merely mean on such lips the overthrow of centralisation, for the States-General which met at Tours was largely an assembly of reactionary malcontents, dominated by the feudal spirit, though talking the language of the Paris democracy of old, and with a touch of the spirit of classic liberty due to the Renascence. Feudalism might talk in the borrowed tones of democracy, might even anticipate some of the doctrines of 1789; its voice was not only false, it was weak, was in fact the voice of a dying man. Still it was great in oratory, with Jehan Masselin, doctor of law (*utriusque juris*) and canon of Rouen Cathedral—himself *summus orator*—to take note of the fact.[3]

The Assembly, after debating how to get to work, resolved to divide itself into six sections, or nations—Paris, Burgundy, Normandy, Aquitaine, Languedoc, and Languedoil—which deliberated separately on their grievances, and then met in general session to draw up the general statement, or *cahier général* of the orders. From this docu-

[1] Relations des Ambassadeurs Venetiens (Documents Inédits), i. 266.

[2] The Parliament, in answer to the remonstrances of the Duke of Orleans against the administration of Anne of Beaujeu in 1485, professed its inability to meddle with affairs of government: "Et quant à la cour, elle est institue pour administrer justice, et non point ceux de la cour, l'administration de guerre, de finances, ni du faict et gouvernement du roy, ni des grands princes. . . . Elle a seulement l'œil et regard au roy qui en est le chef et sous lequel est," etc. (Isambert, xi. 123).

[3] Journal des États Généraux de France tenus à Tours en 1484, redigé en Latin par Jehan Masselin, publié et traduit par A. Bernier (Documents Inédits).

ment it appears that the clergy, particularly the inferior ranks, were much concerned for the liberties of the Gallican Church, on the lines of the Pragmatic Sanction; were very hostile to the usurpations and exactions of the Pope and his agents; invoked the protection of the king against both; held fast to the dogma that a General Council is superior to Rome; and were ready to appeal to such for the reformation of the Church, and in defence of the rights of both Church and State. The nobility were particularly anxious for the conservation of its rights, jurisdictions, prerogatives, liberties, privileges, and so forth, on which Louis had laid so heavy a hand. The restoration of its rights of chase, and the monopoly of the chief offices of administration in noble hands, were for it indispensable to the prosperity of the commonwealth. It remained for the Third Estate to voice the general evils from which the kingdom had suffered. It complained, in particular, of the exhaustion, depopulation, and misery consequent on war, of the papal exactions, of the excesses of an undisciplined soldiery, and drew a melancholy picture of the state of the nation under the late *régime*. "The soldiers are paid to protect the people from oppression, and it is they that oppress them most. The poor labourer must pay and support those who beat him, who dislodge him from his home, who assign him the cold earth for a bed, who rob him of his substance, and this while the soldiers receive their wages to defend him and guard his property."[1] The miserable people was further the victim of the tax-collector, whose exactions were insupportable. To escape extortion many had taken to flight—to England and Brittany; an innumerable multitude had perished of want; others had killed themselves, their wives, and children. Men, women, and children were forced to draw the plough for want of beasts of burden, and this under cover of night, for fear of being arrested by day for non-payment of taxes. A large portion of the soil was lying waste in consequence. The Third Estate gave figures to prove its case. The taxes had risen twelvefold in Languedoc, for instance; from 50,000 livres, under Charles VII., to 600,000 under Louis XI. It was the same story in the other provinces—*grandes pilleries et robberies*—great pillage and robbery in the assessment of the taxes, the inhabitants of one parish being maltreated and imprisoned to pay the debts of its neighbours, and compelled to bribe a swarm of rapacious officials. The Third Estate thus wrote a grim commentary on the furtive hints of Commines and the sweeping onslaughts of Bazin. It will clearly suffer its martyrdom for the sake of an absolute king no longer. Let the king and his officials

[1] Masselin, 672, appendix.

live on the proceeds of the royal domain, alienated so lavishly and iniquitously by the late monarch. So much of the domain alienated is so much taken away, by equivalent, from the people. Retrench; away with the parasite tribe of officials, devourers of the public good, pension holders, and other pampered vampires who reduce the people to beggary, and subsist on their misery. See how the children of the poor beg at the doors of those who enjoy abundance by fleecing the poor man! Reduce the army to the establishment of Charles VII.; place the soldiers under officers of noble birth (very undemocratic), and keep them under strict discipline. Reform the administration of justice. Let judges of probity and knowledge, not ignorant mercenaries who buy their offices, be the guardians of the laws.

The question of the constitution of a council to assist the boy king, Charles VIII., in the government, and execute the reforms demanded, started the supreme question—What are the powers of the Estates? Some of the answers are very remarkable, and if this Assembly had not been a mere debating society, dominated so largely by the feudal magnate; if it had had some substance of power to lend force to its debates, it might have made a Louis XI. wince in his cabinet, perhaps in his coffin. Some bold democrats of the Burgundian and Norman "nations" contended that the supreme power had lapsed to the Estates in the case of a minor king, and that the Estates should "decree and command," in virtue of the popular mandate, so long at least as the council had not received the exercise of the sovereignty. Others claimed the sovereignty for the princes of the blood, and relegated to the Estates only the right to control taxation. This contention was hotly rebutted by Philippe Pot, Lord de la Roche—the modern Cicero, as he was called—one of the Burgundian deputies, who spoke in the name of "the sovereign people" (apparently anticipating Rousseau), by whose suffrages kings were created. In the case of a minority, insisted M. de la Roche, the supreme power devolves on the Estates, who elect from their members those most fitted to carry on the administration. This was not merely his opinion; it was the conclusion of historic research and reflection. When men began to form societies, they elected the most enlightened and honest men to govern them. Those who took possession of the supreme power without election were tyrants, not kings. To whom, then, in such a case as the present, can the right of government belong but to the people, who created kings, and in whom the supreme power fundamentally resides? The State, the government, is merely the public interest, and the public interest is the affair of

the people.[1] The people embraces the totality of citizens, and to them, as represented by the States-General, belongs the right of administration during the minority of the king. If M. de la Roche had omitted this restriction, he might claim to be the political progenitor of Jean Jacques Rousseau. He professed adhesion to history, however, as well as to theory, and contended that this was the principle of the French constitution, historically exemplified over and over again. The States-General is therefore the depot, the guardian of public liberty, and ought not to surrender its charge to the princes of the blood. These are remarkable words, and, according to Jehan Masselin, they were received by the Assembly "very favourably and very attentively." They are an indication at least of enlightened democratic opinion in fifteenth-century France, and amply demonstrate that democracy is as much a product of mediæval as of modern times. And yet M. de la Roche was no anticipation of Rousseau; was, in fact, no democrat worthy of the name; was nothing more than the agent of the court[2] as against the princes, though he played his part very skilfully. Anne de Beaujeu and her husband, guardians of the young Charles, made use of a pseudo-democratic phraseology, like the feudal magnates, for their own ends—to retain power in their own hands. Party intrigue being thus at work, the Estates did not rise to the occasion and earnestly homologate this democratic teaching. After much haranguing, *pro* and *contra*, the debate ended in a compromise. The council, during the king's minority, should be composed of the princes of the blood, the chief magnates, and a number of less notable members selected from the Estates.

While waiving their claim to the supreme power, the Estates energetically asserted their right to control taxation. After much friction with the chancellor, as representing the king, they voted a subsidy of 1,200,000 livres annually for two years, with 300,000 extra to pay the expense of Charles' coronation; but they coupled their grant with the request that they should be reassembled at the expiry of this period, and the stipulation that no taxes should henceforth be imposed without their consent.[3] Notable resolution, if it could have been carried into effect, and if the nobles and the clergy could have consented to bear their share, and not put the burden on the poor

[1] Jehan Masselin, 147.

[2] He owed his election as one of the deputies of Burgundy to the solicitation of Charles VIII., in other words, Anne of Beaujeu; see Lettres de Charles VIII., edited for the Société de l'Histoire de France, by P. Pélicier, i. 23-25.

[3] Masselin, 447-455.

man. As the nobles and the clergy did not comprehend this kind of democracy, and were chiefly concerned for their privileges; nay, insisted that the Third Estate should pay the expenses of the higher orders as well as their own; as, moreover, "the sovereignty of the people," under such auspices, meant the sovereignty of tradition and oppressive prerogatives, France, it is to be feared, lost little when the orators of the "nations," after haranguing away two whole months in hot quarrel with each other, or with the chancellor over the various articles of the *cahier général*, resigned the care of the State to the council, and took their way homewards on the 14th March 1484.

The Estates dispersed and were heard of no more in the reign of Charles VIII. Louis' strong-minded daughter, Anne of Beaujeu, wife of the Lord of Beaujeu, of the House of Bourbon—Madame la Grande, as she was characteristically titled—held the reins for her boy brother with a firm hand, and was strong enough to ignore both the Estates and the council. The Estates came and went like an apparition that starts once or so in a reign into transient notice, from that of Philip the Fair till the beginning of that of Louis XIII., when the apparition vanished, as we shall see, for fully a century and a half, to reappear only in 1789. It is a regrettable fact, but it is none the less patent that France, like most other nations, had not yet learned how to make successful experiments in the art of government. It had its institutions capable of developing free, popular government—its Estates, national and provincial,—but the blossom, never under the old *régime*, became the ripe fruit. These Estates were not truly representative, and could not be, owing to their antiquated form. They represented certain orders, not the nation. The first two, clergy and nobles, represented only a fraction of the people, and yet they had the major influence in these assemblies. Even the Third Estate, which professed to represent the masses, was practically composed of the middle class, and its deputies were merchants or lawyers. Moreover, the jealousies and antagonisms of the orders, the undue influence of merely provincial and local, as distinct from national interests, rendered their assemblies impotent as an engine of legislation or criticism. Besides, what practical good could accrue from a body which met but once in a decade, or a quarter of a century, during some transient crisis, and was regarded as a mere convenient safety valve of the fermenting political spirit of the hour? The ferment passed, a long period of stagnant calm intervened, and the nation fell back into its habitual political lethargy.

Nor does an inspection of the individual orders or classes represented by the States-General yield, at this stage, a more reassuring

guarantee of political capacity or development. The middle class of the Third Estate contained many men, as has been occasionally apparent, whose principles were enlightened, whose patriotism was high toned. From it the absolute monarchy drew its best officials, its ablest champions.[1] Nominally, the Third Estate represented the people,[2] but the people as a political factor was largely a negligible quantity, though it bore the chief burden of the State.[3] It was unfit to wield political power, and apparently as long as it was fairly prosperous, it had no political aspirations. It was, in truth, too ignorant to take an intelligent interest in political affairs. It regarded the king with a superstitious reverence, and if the government did not harass it to excess, it had nothing to fear from popular movements. Starvation alone goaded it into enterprises dangerous to authority, for the stomach is the organ that is chiefly active in the ignorant, superstitious man, and a hungry stomach may become a most potent agent of political activity, as the government had already discovered, and will yet discover on various occasions between the Reformation and the Revolution. Religious passion, too, may come into play as a formidable political factor, but at this stage of religious declension, fanaticism is non-existent in the mass of the people. Superstition needs the fulcrum of doctrinal contention to lend it intolerance and activity. It will then become a force to be reckoned with by the powers that be.

Of the other two orders, the clergy was by far the more important, for the Church was in some respects the nation. Surely, then, the Church is able to mould the government as it pleases? Especially as the higher clergy belong to the order of the nobility,[4] and may count on its alliance? By no means. The monarch, in the person of Charles VII., had taken care, as we have seen, to identify the crown and the crosier; was virtual head of the Church, the champion of its liberties, the real dispenser of patronage; and though Louis formally revoked the Pragmatic Sanction, he did not give away the advantages which it brought the monarchy. In striving to free them-

[1] Michele Suriano in Relations des Ambassadeurs Venetiens, i. 482-490. The Third Estate, he says, fills four important branches of administration: the offices of chancellor, secretaries of State, judges and counsellors of the Parliament, and finance—treasurers, assessors, receivers-general, etc.

[2] Suriano says it comprehended men of the robe (members of the Parliaments), merchants, artisans, peasants (*Ibid.*).

[3] *Ibid.* The people, says Suriano, is the most hardly treated, owing to the burdensome taxes it has to pay.

[4] Suriano noted the fact, and informs us that the two higher orders were really one.

selves from the Pope, the clergy gave themselves into the hands of the king. The Church had identified itself with the government, was becoming more and more the creature of the government, was virtually a department of State, and was fast losing its political individuality and power to strengthen those of the Crown.

And the same fate has overtaken its allied order, the nobility. After Louis XI. the feudal magnate is a changed man. He has lost his feudal importance, though he has retained many of his feudal privileges. He has become a soldier,[1] often indeed a distinguished soldier, and, as a soldier, he is the king's servant. At most he is only the king's pensioner, paid to lend *éclat* to the royal court, and still costly enough to the people, who have to maintain this expensive item of royal magnificence. His sword is the only emblem of his former state that remains to him. Rarely only will he in the future attempt to use the sword against the Crown. His political importance has been reduced to a minimum. Unlike the English aristocracy, the French noblesse did not understand how to combine the political with the military function for the good of their country.

One thing is clear, and it is important to note it. This was an unsatisfactory, and could not be a permanent organisation of the State. To cramp the political growth of a nation, to turn its institutions, its energy, its genius into one narrow channel, was not wise policy. It might strengthen the Crown, and this might be advantageous to the nation in the meantime, but it was bound to weaken, emaciate the nation in the long run. Every constitutional system that ignores the fact of political growth is doomed, and in blighting all growth but that of its supremacy, absolute monarchy was preparing its own blight and its own doom; was working toward the fatal day when the nation should awaken to the fact that it had been the victim of a colossal system of usurpation and egotism, and the colossus should discover that it had built itself on the sand. Authority can only safely build on the sympathy and self-development of the people, not on its own interests. In other words, Power should be an organism and not a mechanism.

But we are anticipating, and must return to the council to which the Estates had trustfully consigned the government, in co-operation with the young king. The masculine Anne of Beaujeu ignored both the council and the Duke of Orleans, its president, and carried on the work of her father against the forces of reaction. It is significant of the thoroughness of Louis' work that this reaction quailed so

[1] "Il proprio esercizio dei nobili," says Suriano, . . . "è la milizia" (Relations, i. 488-490).

easily before a woman. But the woman was the worthy daughter of Louis; worthy, happily, in the nobler sense, for she succeeded, not merely by her diplomatic ability and her strong will, but by her good government,[1] in steering the ship of State over a critical period of eight years. She bridled the intrigues of Orleans, who was threatening to lure the boy king away from her wise influence, and oust her from power,[2] and drove him from the capital. Orleans retired to his castle of Beaugency, with Dunois the younger, and other malcontents,[3] to form a new League of the Commonweal, under the auspices of the Duke of Brittany, Maximilian, and Richard III. of England. The league was at best but a sputter of aristocratic discontent, unsupported by the nation at large. It threatened grave trouble by reason of its allies, but Anne broke one of its mainstays by helping Henry Tudor to crush Richard and ascend the English throne in his place. With this preliminary advantage in her favour, the league proved an easy prey. Orleans was compelled to surrender in his castle of Beaugency and profess submission, Dunois and others of his associates banished, and Maximilian checkmated in Artois, while Charles led an army to overawe the rebel magnates in the south. The invasion of Brittany, where Orleans attempted a second time, in co-operation with Duke Francis II., to marshal the forces of reaction,[4] resulted in the crushing defeat of the confederate lords by La Tremoille at St Aubin du Cormier (27th July 1488), Orleans and many of the rebel leaders being taken prisoners. Anne followed up this decisive victory by forcing her namesake, Anne of Brittany, who had become duchess by the death of her father shortly after the battle of St Aubin, to eschew her proxy husband Maximilian for the hand of Charles VIII.[5] With this virtual incorporation of Brittany with France (consummated a quarter of a century later, when Anne's daughter became the queen of Francis I.[6]), the last prop of feudal factiousness was destroyed. When shortly after this transaction she gave way before the restiveness of her brother, now in his twentieth year,[7] and retired to her domestic duties as the faithful

[1] See, for instance, Lettres de Charles VIII., i. 41, 42, 98, 99, etc.

[2] See his remonstrances against her *régime*, presented to the Parliament in January 1485, in which he accuses her of disregarding the demands of the States-General, and appeals to them once more (Isambert, xi. 119-124; cf. Lettres de Charles VIII., i. 62-65).

[3] Isambert, xi. 129, 130.

[4] *Ibid.*, xi. 173, 174; cf. Lettres de Charles VIII., i. 143.

[5] *Ibid.*, xi. 206-210 (13th December 1491).

[6] See Isambert, xii. 373, for edict which definitely incorporated the duchy (August 1532).

[7] Isambert, xi. 184.

wife of the Lord of Beaujeu, she had the satisfaction of leaving the kingdom both orderly and prosperous. Her short but vigorous interregnum of eight years was creditable to her political sagacity and her masculine will, in respect of its patriotic and beneficent administration. Unfortunately the eight years of her brother's active reign were, in policy and administration, as calamitous as this brief respite from misgovernment had been beneficial to the nation.

Charles VIII. was in truth the antithesis of his father and his sister. He was as rash, superficial, romantic as Louis was profoundly cunning and calculating; he had none of his sister's masculine strength of will, sense, and seriousness of purpose. But his work was done for him, and there was no reaction to impede the pursuit of those adventurous enterprises which appealed to his imaginative, sanguine temperament. Though this temperament unfitted him to be a great ruler, it enabled him to play a meteoric *rôle* in history. He was not a great force in the making of the French monarchy, yet he succeeded in giving a remarkable trend to its destiny. He was the embodiment of the imperial conception of the Crown, the Gallic idea, which saw in ancient Gaul—Gaul beyond as well as on this side of the Alps—the inheritance of the French monarchs, and in the imperial dignity the rightful appanage of their crown.[1] He was not the first to proclaim himself the legitimate successor of Charlemagne. Louis XI., among others, cherished this tradition of the French crown, which served to exalt its dignity. He was, however, the first to attempt its realisation by a grand scheme of conquest. While Louis limited his aggressive policy to the extension and strengthening of the frontiers of France, his son aimed at the conquest of Italy. He became a competitor for the crown of Naples, in virtue of his inheritance of the claim of the House of Anjou, and the crown of Naples was but a stepping-stone to the domination of the whole Peninsula. Italy was menaced by the Spaniards, the Germans, and the Turks; and Charles, egged on by his favourite Stephen de Vesc, and his finance minister, William Briçonnet,[2] was of opinion that he had a better title than any of his rivals. It was a grand dream, very congenial to an impulsive youth thirsting for glory and romantic adventure, but to Philip de Commines and the more sober French

[1] See Relations des Ambassadeurs Venetiens, i. 472. For the growth of this Gallic idea see De Maulde la Clavière, Les Origines de la Revolution Française au commencement du XVIme. Siècle, 8-22. Among the writers of this period it is represented by Seyssel, Jean D'Auton, Jean le Maire de Belges, Pierre le Fenin, Prato, etc.

[2] Lettres de Charles VIII., i. 310.

statesmen, it appeared a mad freak of ambition and folly.[1] By the summer of 1494 Charles had got a large army and fleet in readiness, at infinite cost to the taxpayer,[2] and in August he set out with "a goodly company of bravados," merry-hearted young bloods, whose arrogance was in proportion to their incapacity, and was not redeemed by any sane notion of generalship on the part of the romantic, opinionated, quixotic young king. "Thus," remarks the reflective Commines rather ironically, "we must conclude that this expedition was conducted by God both in going and coming, for the sense of its leaders did precious little for it in this respect."[3] With this *gaillarde compagnie*, Charles actually got as far as Naples, the way being prepared[4] by negotiations with Milan, Venice, Florence. He assumed the Neapolitan crown, and seemed in a fair way towards the realisation of the dream of restoring the sceptre of Charlemagne to France. From this dream he was rudely awakened by the sudden hostility of the Italian States which his maladroit behaviour had excited, and of which Maximilian of Germany and Ferdinand of Spain knew how to take advantage to his undoing. He just managed to escape from the meshes into which his own maladroit recklessness and the craft of his enemies had inveigled him, but at terrible cost to the great army that he had led so thoughtlessly to its doom. With one half he made a dash for the French frontier, and succeeded in cutting his way through the hostile army that barred his progress at Fornovo (6th July 1495), leaving the other half to perish for the most part of famine, pestilence, and the sword.

Charles returned neither a sadder nor a wiser man from this humiliating escapade, which, though it was to have great political and military consequences by-and-by, displayed him to the world as one of the most hare-brained of kings, even in the annals of France. He came back to Lyons to amuse himself with the joust and maintain good cheer,[5] as if this calamitous expedition had been nothing graver than a pleasant holiday trip. Even the death of the Dauphin, which broke in upon these Lyons festivities, brought only a passing respite[6] from the whirl of pleasure in that dissolute court. The only serious interest of that giddy, unstable brain was the passion for art, which Italy had nurtured; the only monument of his reign his castle of Amboise, which his Italian architects, sculptors, painters reared and

[1] Mémoires of Commines, iii. 2: "L'enterprise sembloit à toutes gens sages et experimentez tres dangereuse."

[2] See, for instance, Isambert, xi. 261-263.

[3] Mémoires, iii. 2, 3.

[4] Isambert, xi. 265.

[5] Commines, iii. 185.

[6] Commines, iii. 188: "Mais peu luy dura le deuil."

decorated for him on the banks of the Loire,[1] to the huge astonishment of that generation. At length came the promise of better things in the reaction from the satiety of excess, which showed itself in a sudden fit of repentance and philanthropy. "He took it into his head," says the historian, "to try to live according to the commandments of God, to reform justice, religion, and finance, determining to live within the revenue of 1,200,000 livres granted by the Estates at Tours, taking pleasure in the conversation of religious men, giving largely to beggars, and hearing the complaints and requests of the people, particularly the poor."[2] Unhappily this promise of self-reform, and of a general reform of the State, was nipped in the bud by concussion of the brain. While groping his way with the queen through a dark and filthy gallery of the castle to witness a game of tennis, he struck his head against a door-post, and fell senseless shortly after while watching the players. That night he died (April 1498), in the wretched gallery in which his attendants had laid him on a straw mattress. There was much lamentation, for Charles was gentle and kindly with all, and the belated fit of repentance and well-doing had drawn to him the hopes as well as the affections of the nation, if it had not redeemed the excesses of a wasted career.

SOURCES OF THIS CHAPTER.—Isambert, Recueil Général, x. and xi.; Mémoires de Philippe de Commines, edited for the Société de l'Histoire de France by Mdlle. Dupont, 3 vols., and by Petitot, Collection, xi.-xiii. (1st Series); Lettres de Louis XI., edited for *idem* by Charavay and Vaesen, 6 vols.; Historiarum de Rebus a Ludovico XI., etc., par Thomas Bazin, edited for *idem* by J. Quicherat, 4 vols.; Chronique or Journal de Jean de Troyes or le Roye (Chronique Scandaleuse), edited for *idem*, and in Petitot, xiii. and xiv.; Mémoires d'Olivier de la Marche, edited by Petitot, ix. and x.; Mémoires de Jean du Clercq, *ibid.* xi.; Journal des États Généraux tenus à Tours en 1484, par J. Masselin, edited for the Documents Inédits by Bernier; Relations des Ambassadeurs Venetiens, edited for *idem* by Tommaseo, i.; Lettres de Charles VIII., edited for the Société de l'Histoire de France by Pélicier, i.; La Clavière, Origines de la Revolution Française au Commencement du XVIme. Siècle.

[1] Commines, iii. 221, 222. [2] Abridged from Commines, iii. 223, 224.

## CHAPTER V.

### Absolute Monarchy under Louis XII. and Francis I.—A Contrast (1498-1547).

LOUIS of Orleans, who succeeded Charles VIII. as Louis XII., was the grandson of the brother of Charles VI., whom John without Fear assassinated in 1407. His career before his accession did not give promise of a great reign. Like his father and his grandfather, he had been the patron of faction against the throne, as represented by Anne of Beaujeu, had from questionable motives championed the States-General in the cause of reform, and had headed, sword in hand, an abortive League of the Commonweal. After the retirement of Anne, he stood high in the favour of Charles VIII., and his influence had not been salutary. He was the boon companion of that giddy youth in debauchery and knight-errantry, and France, it seemed, had little to hope from his accession. Yet Louis XII. proved in some respects a very *beau ideal* of a king. Not exactly in his person and manners, for he was by no means of kingly appearance, was given to excess in eating and drinking, and was no model of conjugal fidelity. But in kindliness of heart, sympathy with the people, solicitude for its welfare, in conscientiousness and honesty of administration, Louis XII. was indubitably the best, the most sympathetic French king, next to St Louis, whom we have yet met. Charles V. far surpassed him in the severity of his manners and in the elevation of his mind, but Charles V. did not equal him in the sensitive sympathy which made him so dear to the mass of the people. Only in his foreign policy and his diplomatic methods did he go far astray from the path of rectitude and wisdom, and in these respects even Louis XII. by no means fulfils the conditions of the ideal king. He yielded to the fascination of the Italian policy, which proved to him, as to Charles VIII., the path to disaster, dishonour, and humiliation. Naples was lost, and was too remote to justify the experiment of a second hallucinatory expedition, for the present at least, but Milan was close at hand, and its posses-

sion was worth risking the passage of the Alps once more. As the grandson of Valentine Visconti, Louis had an ancestral claim to the duchy, which Ludovico Moro had usurped, and he determined to prosecute his claim by force.[1] He thus entered on the slippery path of an aggressive foreign policy, with the acquisition of Milan as its immediate goal, and that of Italy itself in prospect. He did not, like Francis I. and Louis XIV., raise his ambition so high as the imperial crown. He refused the offer of it from Maximilian, but he was bent on at least the partial annexation of Italy. In this ambition he was supported by that of his minister, Cardinal George of Amboise, who was eager to wear the tiara, and who, like his master, partially redeemed the selfishness and shamelessness of his foreign statecraft by the enlightened character of his internal administration.

The history of the efforts of king and minister to compass this double ambition is revolting to the moral sense. In foreign policy Louis XII. is a pupil of the school of Louis XI. and Macchiavelli, Ferdinand and the Borgias,—a school bereft of conscience and honour,—but unlike Louis XI., he was unable to palliate his rogueries even with success. True, it was an age of rogues in high places, the age of Pope Alexander Borgia and his infamous son Cæsar, of Ferdinand and Ludovico Moro; an age whose international history is largely the history of how one rogue sought to cheat another. In these circumstances the modern system of alliances for common ends—often abominable ends—was developed, if it was not exactly born, as the historians erroneously teach; and Louis bore his full share of the merit or rather demerit of this achievement, which in his day meant simply the spoliation of the weak by the most revolting methods of falsity and brutality. Happily it is not my business to waste paper and ink in unravelling the intricacies of the diplomatic rascality which brought woe upon woe upon miserable Italy, then and for long after. The mere mention of its treaties and leagues[2] (Treaty of Grenada, League of Cambrai, even a Holy League, and so forth) tells its own tale of perfidy and dishonour. In this perfidy and dishonour Louis was an ample participator, and failed miserably for his pains. He lost Milan, was even threatened with the loss of France, and would have been hard pressed to save his kingdom from partial disintegration if only his enemies could have united heartily to play, at his expense, the game of spoliation which he had joined them in playing at the expense of

[1] See Isambert, xi. 400, and Négociations entre la France et l'Autriche, edited for the Documents Inédits by M. Le Glay, i. 48, Introduction.

[2] See Négociations entre la France et l'Autriche, 2 tomes.

Italy. Could he have been content to rule as a model sovereign over his own territories, history would have had the novel experience of re-echoing, with hardly a jarring note, the chorus of praise which his numerous contemporary panegyrists sang in his honour.

Many of these encomiums were, nevertheless, well deserved. Though he plunged France into an unsuccessful war which lasted intermittently throughout his reign, he succeeded tolerably well in his resolution to preserve France from its miseries. Pity only that he did not cherish that larger humanity which would have spared Italy the horrors of needless pillage oft repeated. Nay, in spite of the burden of an exhausting warfare, he studied incessantly how to make France prosperous, how especially to shield the people from oppressive taxation. Unlike those mad potentates of another age, he did not ruin his own country to ruin another. He made war largely on his own resources, or those of the enemy,[1] alienated the domain, borrowed, taxed the clergy, levied tolls on the free towns, retrenched his household expenses, mortgaged the *aides* and *gabelles* rather than burden the people by an increase of the *tailles*.[2] If he was compelled to ask the nation for a subsidy, he confined his demands to the least possible in the circumstances,[3] and consequently there are few or no complaints in his reign of oppressive taxation, such as we shall hear ever more loudly for the next three-quarters of a century. With the exception of Louis' reign, and a couple or so like it, French history is partly a long wail over exaction. To Louis' sensitive ear this wail was the most painful of sounds and his constant anxiety was to keep his hand out of the pocket of the taxpayer, in other words, the pocket of the poor man. It was his set policy to diminish the *tailles*,[4] and if foreign policy on several occasions necessitated an increase, the demand was always made with the keenest regret, sometimes even with tears, and accompanied by the promise of a speedy reduction. If he did not summon the States-General, except in one single emergency, he was careful to

[1] Isambert, xi. 432, 433: "Il a esté conseillé d'entreprendre et faire et gerer la guerre en Italie, plutôt que porter celle de ses ennemis sur luy et ses pays, pour le grant et fervent amour qu'il porte à ses dits subgets, à leur bien, repos, et soulagement, qu'il estime plus que la valeur des dites conquêtes."

[2] For these expedients see Isambert, xi. 658-662.

[3] *Ibid.*, xi. 534: "De tout nostre coeur nous desirons qu'iciluy soulager et lever sur lui le moins que possible nous est, et du tout faire cesser les dites exactions et abus."

[4] *Ibid.*, xi. 448: "Il avoit quitté sur son peuple le quart des tailles," reduced taxation by a fourth, gratefully acknowledged the States-General of 1506.

take the Provincial Estates[1] into his confidence in matters of taxation, and if the supply proved unnecessary, to remit the amount, as in 1509. In more unpropitious days his demands were received with sympathetic consideration, for the French peasant had learned to trust a king who actually invited the Chamber of Accounts to keep a sharp eye on his expenditure, and eschewed arbitrary methods. Next to the love of the poor man, the most eloquent evidence of the efficacy of his sympathetic and enlightened fiscal *régime* is the fact that commerce and the cultivation of the soil, and with this the wealth of the country, increased by leaps and bounds. France was, too, powerfully influenced by the expansive energy of the age derived from Italy and bringing in its train some compensation for the disasters of the Italian policy. It felt the quickening power of Italian intellectual and artistic life, though the chroniclers and memoir writers of the time seem to be hardly conscious of the fact. Like Charles VIII., Louis XII. was the patron of scholars, artists, and architects; a great builder; the patron, too, of the printing press,[2] and a collector of manuscripts. His artistic tastes were shared by George of Amboise[3] and others of the outstanding men of his time. The prosperity of the people gave scope to the trend of the age in the improvement and enlargement of the towns, in the rise of prices, in the increase of comfort, luxury, refinement.[4]

Louis, as king, forgot the profession of democratic principles which, as Duke of Orleans, he had patronised in the Assembly of 1484. He did not rule in co-operation with the States-General, or reckon with its claim to control taxation, and meet periodically to review the administration. He had recourse only once to its representative wisdom over the question of the marriage of his daughter Claude, and had the good sense to listen to its remonstrances in preference to the advice of his spouse, Anne of Brittany, and his minister, the Cardinal of Amboise, and marry her to Francis of Angoulême, instead of Charles of Austria.[5] But he strove to rule in the reforming spirit of the more enlightened members of the Tours Assembly, as is patent from the legislation of his reign.

[1] See, for instance, Isambert, xi. 432-435.

[2] See the Declaration en faveur de l'imprimerie nouvellement inventée in Isambert, xi. 642-645 (April 1513).

[3] See, for instance, Comptes de dépenses de la construction du Chateau du Gaillon, edited by Deville for the Documents Inédits.

[4] Seyssel, Les Louenges du bon Roi de France Louys XII. (edit. Godefroy), 111 *et seq.*

[5] Isambert, xi. 447-453

Official rapacity found in him its sworn enemy,[1] and the honesty and love of justice, which forbade the buying and selling of fiscal offices,[2] made him the watchful guardian of the people's interest and the ardent patron of legal reform. Witness in particular the Ordinance of Blois (1499) "for the reform of justice and the general utility of the kingdom." This celebrated ordinance,[3] which forbade, among other abuses, the sale or purchase of judicial offices and safeguarded the election of the judges from corruption, was no mere encumbrance of the statute-book, like so many similar ordinances in previous reigns. Some years later the States-General assembled at Tours emphasised, among the benefits of Louis' reign, the fact that he had inaugurated the reign of justice and placed good judges throughout the land.[4] Another notable step in the same direction was the revision and codification of the customs of the kingdom under royal authority. The unity of the law is the corollary of the concentration of power in the Crown, and the great work which Louis pursued with the greatest persistence till the end of his reign[5] was an additional blow to the privileges and arbitrary powers of the seigneurs, lay and clerical, who vainly obstructed its progress. If we add the strenuous efforts to reform a lax ecclesiastical discipline,[6] and raise the morals and the spiritual life of the people, we shall not err in bestowing on him the title of Grand Justiciary in addition to that of "Father of the People." This latter designation was not the mere cant of flattery, for in thus greeting[7] Louis, the orator of the Estates at Tours in 1506 was offering a grateful nation's appreciation of services, inspired by sympathy for the people and devotion to its interests. A ruler can deserve and claim no higher honour than the gratitude of the people, for therein lies a deeper and nobler homage than in the ceremonial act of liegeman towards his lord. There is a ring of sincerity even in the highly pitched laudations of the panegyrists. It says much for King Louis that the poets and the historians spoke for once in their panegyrics the substantial truth, though, of course, it is hardly possible for poets laureate and historiographers royal to avoid

[1] See, for instance, Isambert, xi. 533 *et seq.*; cf. Chroniques de Louis XII., edited for the Société de l'Histoire de France by De Maulde la Clavière, iii. 333-348.

[2] Isambert, xi. 527

[3] *Ibid.*, xi. 323-379; see especially articles 32 and 40.

[4] *Ibid.*, xi. 448.

[5] *Ibid.*, xi. 457-461, 560-563, 609-611; cf. Chroniques de Louis XII., 217-219.

[6] Chroniques de Louis XII., 219-239.

[7] Isambert, xi. 448.

exaggeration even in celebration of a Louis XII.[1] We may safely say at any rate that he was as much loved as Louis XI. was hated, and his death in 1515, after a foolish third marriage with Mary of England (Anne of Brittany, who, in becoming the spouse of Louis in place of Queen Jeanne divorced, became Queen of France a second time, having died the previous year), was not merely a public, but a domestic grief to all France, and not least to the French peasant.[2] He owed, it is true, a great deal to his ministers, to Cardinal D'Amboise and the Chancellor Rochefort in particular; at the same time he owed much to himself, lazy and easy-going though he was by disposition. He was not one of those kings who merely act as a disguise for their ministers, and enjoy the reputation which ought to be theirs. He had the qualities as well as the merits of the good king. The man who diligently read the Offices of Cicero for instruction in his office was worthy of it. He had the will as well as the intention to do right towards his own people, if unhappily lacking in will, if not in intention, to do right towards others.

France might well sorrow over the loss of Louis as it had seldom sorrowed for its kings. To mitigate its grief, there was some ground for consolation in the prospect of the coming reign. The young Francis I. would have captivated the least emotional of peoples, and naturally his majestic figure, his grace, his frankness, his knightly accomplishments, his careless gaiety fascinated the French. Francis was the physical antithesis of Louis XII., whose big nose, thick lips, and low forehead were not prepossessing,—a veritable Apollo,—tall, powerfully built, majestic, the passion of fair ladies, the envy as well as the idol of his fellow knights. A man of considerable power, too, with the making of a real king in him, but too fond of women, too fond of war as a knightly pursuit to be the veritable successor of "the Father of the People." Rash, too, inconstant, non-persistent, and worst of all, lacking in the popular sympathies of his predecessor. France was erelong to have reason to revive its grief for Louis, ruinous and scandalous foreign policy notwithstanding. There was only too good ground for Louis' deathbed apprehension that that big boy would spoil all.

Here is another portrait of him, in amplification of the above, taken at a later time. He is pre-eminently of royal aspect, notes Marino Cavalli; so much so, that without knowing him or having

[1] See, for instance, the effusions of his Italian admirer, the poet Nagonius, in Chroniques de Louis XII., i. 396-404.

[2] Histoire du Bon Chevalier Bayard in Petitot, xxi. 88, 89.

seen his picture, you would single him out of the crowd, and say, That is the king. In nobility and majesty no other prince of his time equals him. He is robust in spite of the fatigue he has gone through. He eats and drinks much, sleeps still better, and only thinks of leading a joyous life. He is very particular in his dress, which is most ornate and select. He possesses, of course, like all his predecessors, the gift of healing scrofula by touching the sick. Though he can support bodily exertion to any extent, intellectual effort is irksome to him, and the burden of affairs (in these later years) is laid on the shoulders of the Cardinal de Tournon and the Admiral D'Annebault. But in great affairs of State—peace and war—his majesty, docile in everything else, acts as the master, and no one would dare to contradict his decisions. He possesses a very sane judgment and no little learning. In art and literature he is a connoisseur and critic of a high order. Everything is easy to him except labour, and the execution of all plans is left to subordinates. He is prodigal of money, easily mollified, and one of his great passions, as in the case of all the Valois, is the chase.[1]

Louis had set his successor an evil example in the matter of foreign policy, and Francis was not slow to follow it, with almost equally futile ultimate effects, and with most disastrous consequences to the French people as well. Success, it is true, crowned with glory unspeakable his *début* as king and as competitor, of the knight-errant type, for the possession of Italy. Marignano raised the prestige of France and gave Milan to its king at one stroke. But the ambition to wear the imperial crown, and the long rivalry with his successful competitor, Charles V., for predominance in Italy and Europe, were fatal to its prosperity and its prestige. Four terrible wars grew out of that ambition and that rivalry, wars which involved indescribable misery, not merely to Italy, but to France. Pavia effaced Marignano—captivity as well as defeat,—and Pavia, in spite of the League of Cognac, led on to the Peace of Cambrai and the renunciation of Milan. Even the alliance with the mighty Soliman,[2] which scandalised a hypocritical, pagan Christendom, could not avail to win it back, and though the Peace of Nice brought some compensation in the shape of Savoy, and the Peace of Crespi held out

[1] Relations des Ambassadeurs Venetiens, i. 278-285.

[2] For the commencement of the relations of Francis with Soliman, which dates from 1525, after the disaster of Pavia, see Négociations de la France dans le Levant, edited for the Documents Inédits by S. Charrière, i. 112 *et seq.*; cf. Commentaires de Blaise de Monluc, edited for the Société de l'Histoire de France by Alph. de Ruble, i. 144-148.

the false prospect of eventually regaining Milan, the duchy went at last to Charles' son, Philip. Four wars for the sake of a will-o'-the-wisp ambition, which Charles knew how to withstand in the field, and circumvent in the cabinet so successfully—wars involving the devastation of France, north and south, and the most grinding taxation—form a sad memorial of the misguided statesmanship and military incapacity of this magnificent but ill-balanced and luckless occupant of the French throne.

The shadow of popular misery which this succession of wars cast on the reign of Francis was deepened by its misgovernment. Like his predecessor, he professed his anxiety to protect the people from exaction,[1] and made an occasional example of corrupt officials in high places, notably of Semblançay, the superintendent of the finances, who was hanged at Paris in 1527 for embezzlement,[2] the Admiral Chabot, condemned by a commission in 1540,[3] and the Chancellor Poyet, suspended in 1542, and fined 100,000 livres in 1545 for the same crime.[4] The statute-book bears ample witness to his efforts to secure an efficient financial administration. Edict follows edict in denunciation of peculation and extortion; expedient on expedient for their suppression. Thus the receivers of the taxes, who were subsequently increased to sixteen,[5] are enjoined to keep strict account of the sums collected,[6] and fiscal offices are to be held by royal appointment, not by inheritance.[7] A controller is appointed in each district to supervise the local fiscal hierarchy,[8] and an intendant of finance is charged with the duty of checking the accounts of the treasurer of the exchequer.[9] Peculation is made punishable by death,[10] and some of the delinquents are occasionally hung or fined and banished.[11] But these remedies were plainly inefficacious. The complaints of malversation extend over the whole reign.[12] It was not for want of officials at all events, for the creation of offices are very

[1] Isambert, xii. 120: "Car de tout nostre coeur et pouvoir desirons le soulager, et garder de foule et oppression."

[2] Journal d'un Bourgeois de Paris, sous le règne de François I. (1515-1536), edited for the Société de l'Histoire de France, by Lud. Lalanne, 309. The writer of the journal holds Semblançay guilty of peculation, and M. Paris seems to prove conclusively that Louise de Savoy was not responsible, as Semblançay averred, for the non-transmission of the large sum to Marshal Lautrec in Italy, which brought disaster to the French army.

[3] Isambert, xii. 721. [4] *Ibid.*, xii. 888. [5] *Ibid.*, xii. 796.

[6] *Ibid.*, xii. 188. [7] *Ibid.*, xii. 189. [8] *Ibid.*, xii. 199.

[9] Bailly, Histoire Financière, i. 218.

[10] *Ibid.*, xii. 342, 902. [11] *Ibid.*, xii. 362.

[12] See, for instance, Isambert, xii. 342, 796, etc.: "Larcins, pilleries, faussetés et abus commis et perpétrés en nos finances."

numerous. Unfortunately, the motive of these creations is not so much to remedy corruption as to bring grist to the royal mill, these offices being sold to the highest bidder. The impecuniosity of the monarch, and the eagerness of the middle class for the petty distinction of official employment,[1] is the secret of this multiplication of men in authority which transformed France into the paradise of officialdom and the purgatory of the taxpayer. The people has to pay both for the prodigality of its king and the vanity of the educated proletariate that swarms from the universities in quest of social distinction at its expense. "The sale of offices is enormous," remarks Cavalli in 1546, "and the number of officials increases every day, though half the number would suffice." And yet the fiscal administration is execrable. Of the sums voted by the Provincial Estates, the greater part is eaten up by the locust tribe of collectors, treasurers, etc. The ordinary *tailles* are supplemented by extraordinary demands, and by loans, or rather presents, since they are never repaid. "Corruption is everywhere. If all the swindlers were to be hanged, there would scarcely remain a single treasurer-general in France." The clergy as well as the people are mulcted to support the new hierarchy, under the pseudonym of free gifts. The Pope is silent; at any rate he is entirely ignored, and the king being, in virtue of the Concordat, the patron of benefices, there is no opposition. "The king takes, the clergy pays, and the Pope says nothing."[2] The *tailles* are eight times higher than in the reign of Charles VII.,[3] and these sixteen millions are sucked out of the people without its consent, for Francis never summoned the States-General, and paid no heed to the mild remonstrances of the Provincial Estates[4] or the Parliament of Paris, which was compelled to register the royal decrees by *lettres de jussion*.[5] The only occasion on which he appealed to the nation was after his return from captivity, when he condescended to ask the advice of the Notables at Cognac and Paris on the question of the renunciation of the Treaty of Madrid. He neither admitted nor practised the limitation of his prerogative to fleece the people. Charles V., records the Venetian ambassador, Correro, once asked the King of France how much his kingdom brought him a year. "As much as I will," was the proud reply.[6]

[1] Relations, i. 486-488. The number of students at Paris at this time (over 15,000) is explained by the eagerness of the bourgeoisie to fit their sons for employment in the civil service.

[2] Relations des Ambassadeurs Venetiens, i. 294-301.

[3] Bailly, Histoire Financière, i. 258. 16,000,000 livres.

[4] Isambert, xii. 407. [5] See, for instance, Isambert, xii. 542. [6] Relations, ii. 142.

Unhappily his power to tax might also be measured by the poverty of the people, and by its bovine patience under oppression, which struck another of these Venetian observers. "As it is on the peasants that the taxes weigh most heavily," remarks Marino Giustiniano, "these good people are so poor that every fresh charge becomes intolerable." Their patience and loyalty are, indeed, extraordinary, but he forgets to remark that they had their limits, as the outbreak of insurrection [1] and the explosion of the popular hatred of the official vampires more than once reminded the royal spendthrift by the grace of God. "Whatever burden he puts upon them, they bear it without demur." [2] This burden was augmented by the prodigality with which Francis squandered the royal domain, in spite of the edicts annulling previous alienations, which were never put in execution, or whose execution was frustrated by renewed grants. What was thus lost to the ordinary revenue was filched from the taxpayer by some extraordinary expedient. When we add the other burdens which indirectly affected the pocket of the people—extension of import dues to other articles [3] besides silk, the increase of the *gabelle* [4] or tax on salt, of which every family was bound to consume a certain quantity at an increased price, loans at the people's expense,[5] aids and impositions,[6] etc.—we can hardly avoid the impression derived from the statute-book, that if the Venetian ambassador found France a great and powerful State in 1546, it was great and powerful in spite of its administration. That administration is composed of a swarm of parasite officials, whom the king occasionally compels to disgorge, and whose main object is to fleece the people rather than develop the prosperity of the country. Doubtless the country was better able to bear the strain than it had been a century earlier. The quickening forces of the Renascence were making themselves felt in the development of commerce and industry; but it is none the less true that the exactions of the government far exceeded the limit at which taxation is compatible with the general welfare, particularly the welfare of the poverty-stricken masses.

The true gauge of the greatness of a reign is the prosperity of the people, and judged by this standard, the reign of Francis

[1] See Archives Curieuses (Cimber et Danjou), ii. 452-477, for an account of a riot at Lyons in 1529, as a protest against a special tax on wine and the high price of corn, and iii. 39-64, of an insurrection at La Rochelle and the neighbouring provinces against the extension of the salt tax in 1542.

[2] Relations, i. 96: "Quanto grandi angarie gli mette, tanto li pagano senz alcuna replica."

[3] Isambert, xii. 643, 695.

[4] *Ibid.*, xii. 354, 410, 745.

[5] Journal d'un Bourgeois, 135.

[6] Isambert, xii. 282.

presents a melancholy contrast to that of "the Father of the People." Whenever we catch a glimpse of the masses, as distinct from the commercial and industrial classes, it is too often a glimpse of misery, begotten by oppression. Famine, too, occasionally intrudes its gaunt spectre into the melancholy picture. The misery caused by nature cannot be laid directly at the door of the government, but an efficient and provident government is expected to be equal to the task of keeping the people from dying of sheer want in hundreds of thousands. Such was the tragic fate of the French peasant for five long years, from 1528 onwards, and the only evidence of remedial measures on the part of the government, afforded by the statute-book, is limited to a single statute, prohibiting the speculators in grain from hoarding and selling at an exorbitant price, and directing that the people shall be served before the merchants at the corn markets.[1] But let the horror-stricken scribe, Goulart by name, tell his own tale. "For five consecutive years, from 1528, Nature refused her gifts even to the most laborious, and this not locally, but throughout the whole kingdom. Summer was transformed into winter, so that the fruits of the earth could not ripen. The number of poor and beggars increased to such an extent that it was horrible to see them in troops, insupportable to go near them, and still more dangerous to endure their presence owing to the abominable stench which proceeded from their bodies, nourished on all sorts of aliments that came to hand, and poisoning the air. After devouring everything in the gardens, even to the stalks and roots of cabbage, they had recourse to savage and unused herbs, and cooked kettlefuls of marsh-mallow and thistles which they mixed with a little bran or ground oats. They made bread of the roots of bracken, of acorns, of beech-nuts, which produced terrible contagious maladies. One might see troops of men and women of all ages staggering about the streets, or lying on the point of death on the ground, drawing their last breath. The stables were full, the dunghills covered. Some were so feeble that they could with difficulty open their lips to tell their misery, or recover breath, tottering on their legs more dead than alive. Horrible was it to see bands of poor mothers, emaciated, deformed, benumbed, and surrounded by or carrying little children, crying piteously from hunger, like to break one's heart." After further harrowing details, the chronicler adds, "This famine produced a fearful malady called Trousse-galand (cholera morbus), which in a short time carried away a third of the population in some districts."[2] He mentions no relief

[1] Isambert, xii. 355, 356 (October 1531).

[2] Archives Curieuses, iii. 272-275. Cf. Journal d'un Bourgeois, 404 *et seq.*

agencies set on foot by the government, or by private enterprise; and the mortality proves that there was little enough relief from any quarter; but in the collection, in which this story is printed, there is a curious extract[1] of the accounts of the royal household for the same period. We should expect to find numerous items of the royal charity at such a time. It is to be hoped that the extract is incomplete. As it is, it shows the monarch mainly concerned in purchasing jewellery, pictures, statues, and other articles of luxury. The royal account-book is silent on the famine,[2] which was carrying off a third of his majesty's lieges in certain parts of the kingdom. His majesty's lieges were probably of opinion that the taste for art might at such a time have been sacrificed to the sense of humanity. Francis was a humanist, the generous patron of art and letters, as we shall learn presently, and he would have done more honour to his character and his office, and stood higher as a ruler, had he exemplified his humanism by an equally sensitive and generous sympathy for the sufferings of these haggard mothers and their perishing infants. It is to be feared that the statue of hunger had no place in the royal galleries, and that the sorrows of the people had no echo in that magnificent and dissolute court.

In spite of maladministration and misery, frequent famine and wholesale mortality, which have left their deep shadows on his reign, Francis succeeded in imposing the world by his magnificence and his proficiency in the art of display. He gloried in being the first gentleman of the kingdom, and the title might be an honourable one, if true nobility, and not mere caste distinction, if the virtues of the real gentleman and not the vices of mere rank, were the object of emulation. As to this matter, the tone of Francis' court—showy, brilliant, intellectual, artistic, perfect in politeness, gay, and very accommodating in its morals—will appeal to the reader according as he is more concerned for the spirit, or the form. Those who admire the ornamental in a king and judge of the greatness of a reign by its external brilliance, will find no difficulty in making a hero of Francis. He is munificent, picturesque, overflowing with good spirits, and surpasses all his predecessors in the grandeur of his person and his ways. His journeys—and he was very fond of travelling—are affairs of the utmost magnificence,[3] and his court, wherever he sojourns, is the

[1] Archives Curieuses, iii. 79-100.

[2] I have come across one instance of royal charity, however. The Journal d'un Bourgeois mentions, under the year 1532, that Francis caused twelve francs' worth of bread to be distributed to the poor at Chatelherault for four months (427; cf. 428, 429).

[3] See, for example, the entrance into La Rochelle (Archives Curieuses, iii. 54, 55).

scene of pageants, tournaments, plays. He is as unlike the homely Louis as two successive kings could be. To the gentleman o luxurious tastes and caste instincts Louis is the *roi roturier*—th plebeian king,—and his economy is avarice; to the people he is th best king that France has had for centuries. I am inclined to believe that the popular judgment was the truer of the two, and it is certain that the people regretted Louis and did not love his successor,[1] except in a conventional sort of way. On the other hand, he is the demigod of the nobility,[2] but it is a nobility that has few or no popular sympathies. To excel in battle and tournament, to be invincible in love and war, to assume a superior and a contemptuous tone towards the bourgeoisie, to look upon the peasant as a hereditary serf, are the marks of a high-born gentleman of those days—a species of gentlemanliness by no means extinct in this pretentious world. It was as the leader of the French noblesse that Francis drew the sword at Marignano, and triumphed over the rude Swiss pikemen. In his letter to his mother,[3] the victory is primarily the victory of gentlemen over commoners. These commoners were, nevertheless, no mean foe, and their overthrow was no dishonour. In fond maternal eyes the victory appeared, indeed, worthy of a Cæsar, and Louise de Savoy celebrates her martial son as "the glorious and triumphant Cæsar, subjugator of the Helvetians."[4] This grandiose style is the keynote of his reign. It is at least different from that of Louis IX. and Louis XII., and the difference was not to the benefit of the French people.

No wonder that the high-born gentlemen of these days submitted in the most docile spirit to be made the slaves of a monarch who shared their sympathies and was very lavish in the matter of pensions and court perquisites. The old feudal spirit seemed dead, and Francis reaped to the full the fruits of the work of his predecessors. He emphasised the power as well as the pomp of the monarchy, and that power was practically and theoretically unlimited. The royal pretension to absolute power was no longer questioned, and the fact was so patent that it struck each of the keen observers whom the Doge and Council of Venice sent to

[1] There is not a word in the "Journal d'un Bourgeois," for instance, of any sympathetic affection between king and people, as has been pointed out by its editor, M. Lalanne.

[2] "Jamais n'avoit ésté vue roy en France de qui la noblesse s'esjouyst autant" (Histoire du Bon Chevalier, Petitot, xvi. 89).

[3] In Petitot, xvii. 184-188.

[4] See her journal in Petitot, xvii. 398

France as ambassadors in the sixteenth century. "The French," remarks Cavalli,[1] "honour their king with a sentiment so profound that they have given him not only their goods and their lives, but their honour and their souls." "There are other countries, such as Spain and Germany, greater and more powerful than France, but there is not one so easy to manage. In this lies its strength—in its unity and obedience. . . . Some people are born to obey, others to command . . . and the French have entirely surrendered their liberty and their will to the king. It is sufficient for him to say, 'I wish such and such a sum, I ordain, I consent;' and the execution of his will is as prompt as if the whole nation had acted on its own initiative. The thing has already gone so far that some of the French who see further than others, say, 'Our kings were formerly called kings of the Franks (*Reges Francorum*); at present one might call them kings of the Slaves (*Reges Servorum*). . . . The present king (Francis I.) can boast that he has outdone all his predecessors."[2] "The kingdom of France," notes Suriano, fifteen years later, "depends on the supreme will of the king, who is loved and served by his people, and possesses an absolute authority. He is prince by natural right, since this form of government has lasted for more than a thousand years (*sic*). He does not succeed by election, and thus is not forced to woo the affection of the people, and as his title does not rest on force, he is not tempted to be cruel and tyrannic."[3] The later Valois were not men of force of character, or will, yet at the accession of Francis II., in 1559, French loyalty, according to another of these ambassadors, Giovanni Michele, was so great that even a weak king could play the arbitrary ruler with impunity. "The French kings are absolute masters of their subjects, who profess not merely a devoted obedience and a great affection for their prince; they reverence, they adore him. Thus the king may tax their goods, their labour, their lives, all that they have, without fear of revolt. It is as if they were slaves."[4] These ambassadors see things in rather roseate colours, and some of them are great admirers of autocracy. They do not stop to explain the inconsistency between this universal affection for the monarch and the universal misery which they occasionally note. Michele, in fact, celebrates "the devoted obedience and great affection" of the subject for the prince at the very moment that a large number of these same subjects was preparing to dispute the royal will by force of arms! In his opinion the great liberality of the French kings towards their friends and

[1] Relations, i. 268 (1546).
[2] *Ibid.*, i. 270-272 (1546).
[3] *Ibid.*, i. 508-511 (1561).
[4] *Ibid.*, ii. 402.

servants is sufficient to maintain the good relations of master and slave. "The French kings do not practise economy, because they well know that their greatness, their power, their treasures consist in their liberality towards their friends and servants." Though the sequel of civil war was to disprove Michele's assurances of the abject servility of the French people, it did not shake the royal pretension to be absolute master of France. "The authority of the king," wrote Girolamo Lippomano in 1577,[1] "is in every sense absolute. Formerly it was limited from time to time. Now, the kings say that they are no longer minors, and they will recognise no other law but their own will."

Though the claim was unconstitutional and unhistoric, Francis did not hesitate to act on it. He did not give the States-General the opportunity of disputing it, as they had done in 1484, and he treated with angry contempt the occasional resistance of the Parliament, which was beginning to aspire to a political *rôle*, to his decrees. "My Parliament," burst out the angry king, in response to its remonstrances against the Concordat in 1517, "wishes to make itself another Venetian senate. I shall not suffer this. Let it concern itself with the dispensation of justice."[2] The outburst was accompanied by threats of incarceration. The Parliament gave way, whilst recording that it registered the obnoxious edict only "by express command of the king, several times repeated." During his captivity it again attempted to make its influence felt, particularly against the rapacity of the Chancellor, Duprat, who had got himself nominated to the Archbishopric of Sens, and against the growing practice, originating with Louis XI.,[3] and taken advantage of by the chancellor for personal ends, of evoking causes from its cognisance to the Grand Council. Louise de Savoy, who acted as regent, resented its activity as an encroachment on the royal power,[4] and, after his return, Francis held a *lit de justice*, or court presided by the king in person, to administer one of those gruff, imperious rebukes which the Parliament was compelled to digest with the best grace possible. The president, Claude Guillard, in his speech for the Parliament, expounded a very thorough-going theory of the royal power, while seeking to limit its exercise by moral restraints. "We have no wish," said he, "to doubt or dispute your power. That would be a kind of sacrilege. We know well that you are above the

[1] Relations, ii. 496.

[2] See Isambert, xii. 75, 114-116. [3] *Ibid.*, xii. 277.

[4] See Captivité du Roi Francis I., par Champollion-Figeac, 395 *et seq.* (Documents Inédits).

laws,[1] and that the laws and ordinances cannot constrain you, have no coactive power over you; but we venture to assert that you ought not, and are not wishful to do all that you can, but only that which is reasonable, good, and equitable, in other words, justice."[2] The answer of Francis was a striking illustration of the first part of the speech, a crushing disclaimer of the moral obligations suggested in the second part. "The king forbids you to intermeddle in any fashion whatsoever in matters of State, or any other matter except justice, . . . revokes and declares null all the limitations which you have attempted to place on the power of his mother during her regency, . . . prohibits you from making any limitations, modifications, or restrictions of his ordinances, edicts, charters, . . . declares that you have no jurisdiction or power over the Chancellor of France, and has declared null all that you have attempted against him."[3]

Here we have the absolute king *de facto* and *de jure*, the "I will, I ordain, I consent" of the Venetian ambassador from the lips of Francis himself. The king is above the law, exempt from its coactive power, according to its authoritative exponent, the president of the Parliament, and is only morally bound to rule in accordance with the statute-book. It is practically the same doctrine that was expounded by the greatest political philosopher of the reign, Claude de Seyssel, Bishop of Marseilles under Louis XII., and Archbishop of Turin under Francis—a man of affairs as well as a philosopher, for he was the trusted counsellor and ambassador of Louis XII., and the intimate friend of the Cardinal of Amboise.[4] Seyssel developed his political system in a work entitled "La Grant Monarchie de France," a work eminently worthy of study for the light it throws on the political thought of the time. His system is in reality an exposition of the government of Louis XII., of the enlightened, benevolent rule whose image it would be in vain to seek in the administration of Francis. Our philosopher prefers in theory an aristocratic government, understanding by aristocracy, not a hereditary caste, but the best men of the nation. He is quite content, however, to accept hereditary monarchy as established in France, though it has its drawbacks, and the best guarantee of good government would be the election by the monarch of the best man, among his subjects, to succeed him, as did Nerva in the case of Trajan. For popular government he has a deeply rooted dislike: Government by the

[1] "Scavons bien que vous estes par sus les loix."

[2] Isambert, xii. 277, 278. [3] *Ibid.*, xii. 279, 280.

[4] For a short sketch of his life see Négociations entre la France et l'Autriche, preface to tom. i.

people has always been regarded as tending to disorder, as full of danger, and hostile to men of virtue. The king should, therefore, not be subject to popular control, or even to that of the States-General. The sovereignty should, nevertheless, be limited by certain checks, for there should be equilibrium of interests, and the interests of the various orders of the State should be bound up with those of the monarch. These checks are not the checks of modern constitutional monarchy. They are moral and traditional—religion, justice, administration; in other words, the Church, the Parliament, the official hierarchy. The king should rule in the fear of God, he should observe the laws, he should maintain order. These checks might produce an admirable ruler in the person of a Louis XII., the monarch that Seyssel evidently has in view. It did not occur to him that only in such exceptional cases can any mortal be safely entrusted with power, limited merely by moral and traditional restraints, and that the essential of good government must usually be the sense of compulsion. Self-restraint, as history has shown over and over again, is insufficient as a basis, though it may be a powerful auxiliary, of good government. Francis' imperious attitude towards Church and Parliament, and the arbitrary and corrupt character of his administration, afford a striking example of the value of such "checks."

I have thus far regarded Francis I. as king. It is necessary, in view of the influence which his personality wielded on France, to look at him also as man. His private life has been severely judged, and the memoir writers and historians have vied with each other in expatiating on the moral declension ascribed to his example. One is therefore glad to find a recent writer who has charged himself with a brief for the harshly judged monarch, in the effort to rehabilitate his moral character from the aspersions of which it has long been the object. His book[1] deals largely with the unsavoury side of that character, as mirrored in the stories of Beaucaire, Laval, Brantôme, Guyon, Varilles. No sober inquirer would dream of taking a writer like Brantôme, too seriously, except, perhaps, when he discards the *rôle* of scandalmonger for decent narrative. Unfortunately generation after generation of French historians have repeated these stories in a not too critical spirit, for many of the French memoir writers and historians—M. Michelet in particular—have a rather pronounced predilection for the piquant details of a royal love affair. In palliation thereof, it has to be remembered that the domestic history of the French kings, with some exceptions, affords but too ample illustration

[1] Études sur François Premier, par Paulin Paris, 2 vols.

of the practical disregard of the moral law. They are orthodox, truly pious men, all of them, but adultery and fornication accord very well at times with their orthodoxy and piety. Pruriency and malevolence had scope enough for story telling, and they have not neglected their opportunities. In the case of Francis I. they have, it seems, added invention and exaggeration to fact. They have really somewhat overdone it, and M. Paulin Paris has little difficulty in discrediting many of the enormities of which Francis has hitherto been held guilty. That he attempted to seduce Mary of England, the young wife of Louis XII., his own father-in law, or that he was guilty of more than a fraternal passion for his sister Margaret, or that he became the victim of a shameful malady, are stories which may be relegated to the low public-house bar, or the gambling saloon. That they should have been retailed by historians of respectability and even of genius, afford a shocking illustration of the strange way in which history is sometimes written. Nevertheless, in spite of M. Paris' laudable protests against the gutter literature of which Francis has been made the victim, it is as impossible to see in his hero a paragon of virtue, as it is to mistake him for a model ruler. There are other witnesses besides the gutter writers and their unsavoury borrowers, whose testimony is not very creditable to Francis as husband and father. "Francis," says the gruff Tavannes—to quote one of the most reliable of these witnesses—"was wounded by the women in body and mind. The little band of Madame D'Etampes' maids of honour governed. Alexander saw the women when he had no business on hand; Francis attended to business when he had no women about him."[1] It is a fact that he was unfaithful to both his first wife, Claude of France, and his second, Eleanora of Spain. No very damning phenomenon, maybe, seeing that both marriages were political marriages, and Francis was, what Burns would have called, "a very deil among the lasses." "A court without the ladies," said he, "is a spring without roses." But the first official mistress, Madame Chateaubriant, who shared his bed, was a married woman, and when he tired of her in favour of a young beauty, Anne de Pisseleu or D'Heilly, whom his mother, out of dislike to Madame, threw in his way, and whom he made Duchesse D'Etampes, he must needs give her a husband *pro forma*, M. de Brossi, and be guilty of a double adultery a second time. His ideas of marriage were certainly somewhat farcical, and did not conduce to elevate social morality. Marriage might be a sacrament in the reign of Francis I., but the sacrament did not tend to sanctify domestic life. Under such auspices, libertinage was a fashionable

[1] Mémoires de Tavannes, Petitot, xxiii. 217.

vice, and the gentleman of fashion must perforce be an adulterer. Adultery seemed, in fact, to have a particular fascination for the first gentleman of the kingdom. The letters of Diana of Poitiers show conclusively that he was the lover of this celebrated beauty, who became the mistress of the Dauphin Henry, during the lifetime of her husband.[1] No sooner was he the husband of the innocent Claude, than he took it into his head to seduce the young wife of an elderly advocate of Paris, and to draw on himself, as the hero of one of those coarse popular farces in vogue at the time, the ridicule of Paris.[2] It is very significant of the moral laxity of the court, that this ugly episode was made the subject of a novelette[3] by Francis' sister, who, in spite of her reputed saintliness and exquisite culture, retails the story with evident zest and no little humour. That a virtuous woman could take pleasure not only in hearing and telling, but in writing an adventure of this kind, even as a preface to a homily on virtue, leaves us to divine the moral tone of the court and society of her time. It is sufficient to remember that Boccacio was the popular novelist of the day, and that Margaret imitates the style and matter of the "Decameron" only too well. These women of easy manners, on whom Francis spent so much of his revenue and his time, doubtless contributed grace and elegance to his court, whose gaiety and refinement were the admiration of Europe, but at the cost of moral seriousness and effective administration. Francis might, according to the Venetian ambassador, play the master in political affairs of the first importance; in the bestowal of offices, pensions, honours, the self-interest and the likes and dislikes of mistresses and their minions were allowed far too much influence. Intrigue, corruption, extravagance flourished under their *régime*, and so marked was this influence in administration, that the government of Francis might, to only too large an extent, be called the government of the divan. In this respect he set an evil example, which too many of his successors were only too prone to follow.

Francis has one genuine claim to the admiration of posterity in his intellectual and artistic sympathies. His interest in art and literature proceeded not from a mere craving to invest his crown and his reign with the lustre of intellectual distinction, as in the case of

[1] See Journal d'un Bourgeois, p. 192, and Appendix, 467, 468. The Journal mentions a common report that he had violated her in the absence of her father, the Lord of St Vallier. Evidently the stories of Francis' excesses, which M. P. Paris seeks to discredit as non-contemporary, are not all of this character.

[2] See Journal d'un Bourgeois, 13, 14.

[3] Contes de la Reine de Navarre. See the Introduction to Lettres de Marguerite d'Angoulême, edited for the Société de l'Histoire de France par F. Génin.

Louis XIV. By universal consent he loved art and letters for their own sake, and in contrast to his great rival, Charles V., he evinced an ardent sympathy with the new culture. He is, in truth, a child of the Renascence, intellectually alert and progressive, artistic in his instincts, hostile to scholastic obscurantism, the enthusiastic votary of knowledge. Poet, artist, scholar, he is the embodiment of the enlightened king of the "Revival of Letters," which powerfully influenced the intellectual life of his reign. For a century France had felt the glowing inspiration of Italian culture, as nurtured by the study of classic literature. Towards the end of the fourteenth century, Christine de Pisan—the most cultured woman of her age—shed the lustre of her classic learning on the court of Charles V., and Charles himself was, as we have seen, a lover of books and a patron of scholars. It was only in the latter half of the fifteenth, however, that awakened Italy became the intellectual magnet of France. Evidence of this influence abounds. Witness, for instance, the harangues of the orators of the States-General of 1484, who quote freely from Roman poets and philosophers, and are animated by the republican spirit of classic times. The expeditions of Charles VIII. and Louis XII. opened the flood-gates of Italian culture, and in the reign of Francis, France became a second Italy in its art, refinement, luxury, as mirrored in its noble castles, its public buildings, its schools of painting, its educational foundations, and, unfortunately, in its low moral tone. We have already caught glimpses of the beginnings of this transformation in the reigns of Charles VIII. and Louis XII. In that of Francis the leaven of the new culture is operating powerfully, in spite of the opposition of the Sorbonne. In architecture and art it has already achieved monumental triumphs in the magnificent castles at Blois, Rouen, Tours, Orleans, Chambord, St Germain, Vincennes, Fontainebleau, and in the works of the artists whom Italy gave to France, and who made the Fontainebleau school famous—Da Vinci, Del Sarto, Benvenuto Cellini, Rosso, etc. France has its great scholars,[1] too,—Budé, Danes, Vatable, Olivetan, the translator of the Bible, Robert Estienne, scholar as well as printer, Estienne Dolet, Postel, J. C. Scaliger, and many more,—and a royal foundation, the College of France, the rival of the Sorbonne, to encourage and disseminate their learning. What these men did for the diffusion of the new culture it is not my business to tell. It was no mean achievement assuredly. More important for us is the fact

[1] See an account of them in the *English Historical Review*, July 1900, by Arthur Tilley, art. "Humanism under Francis I." See also Mr Christie's book on Estienne Dolet.

that their scholarship was the ally of the critical spirit. This critical spirit was mainly concerned with texts, grammar, philology for the present, but its function was capable of far wider application. By-and-by it will fasten on politics, philosophy, religion itself, as well as on manuscripts and printed books. Humanism taught men eventually to think for themselves as well as incited them to study critically the masterpieces of antiquity. It set the printing press a-going and multiplied books, not all of them critical editions of the classics. The moment it did so, it became the germ of a colossal future revolution, political as well as intellectual and religious. Nay, humanism, in its political ideals, was already favourable to the growth of liberty. Many of its apostles were, in theory at least, enthusiastic admirers of republican virtue and freedom, as championed in Rome of old. Though they might reckon a Francis I. and other absolute potentates among their patrons, their aspirations and their ideals were in reality antagonistic to the political system of such potentates. Francis as humanist was, in fact, though unconsciously, antagonistic to Francis as absolute monarch. The intellectual liberty of the humanists, which jarred on the traditional prejudices of the Sorbonne and the monks, was destined to challenge the pretensions of the absolute king. Nor were they all mere academic champions of this classic political creed, like Erasmus in his "Adages." The growing enlightened class contained some earnest believers in political freedom, as opposed to monarchic absolutism, and one, La Boëtie, who even, as we shall see, advocated that creed in passionate language. True, that voice was a voice crying in the wilderness. The day was to come when the voice of cultured France, re-echoing the voice of antiquity, and speaking through the philosophers of the eighteenth century, would produce startling political effects.

The reign of Francis is memorable for the beginnings of another great movement in France—the revival of religious life. The Protestant movement, which took root in the latter half of that reign, was indebted to humanism for a certain amount of impulse. Humanism unlocked the Greek New Testament, and to the more earnest-minded of its votaries, the study of the New Testament led to Christ and pristine, as distinct from traditional Christianity. Humanism was, however, not necessarily a religious or moral influence, though hostile to the scholasticism of the Sorbonne and the monks, and the intellectual and artistic tastes of a Francis I. did not lead to spiritual reaction, or moral regeneration. He was not carried away by the moral enthusiasm which stirred the nobler humanists north of the Alps. He was essentially the humanist of the Italian

type, intellectually ardent, morally lax, spiritually lukewarm, though avoiding Italian scepticism. Protestantism could not, indeed, appeal to such a nature, for, though deriving some inspiration from humanism, it was at first a spiritual, and soon became a theological movement, hostile to intellectual freedom, though not to intellectual culture, and as ready as the intolerant orthodoxy of the Sorbonne to persecute free thought in defence of its own orthodoxy.

In its origin it was essentially a psychological movement, and it is well to emphasise the fact in view of what it erelong became in France, as elsewhere. Those who overlook this initial feature fail to explain its origin. It was not merely, as some would assert, the result of the national aspiration transferred into the domain of religion. Nor was it merely the outcome of reaction against scholasticism and tradition. It was still less an intellectual endeavour after a more reasonable creed. It had nothing to do with politics, or philosophy, or intellectual aspiration. Its connection with politics—a momentous connection in France, as shall appear—came later; its alliance with philosophy, with reason, as exemplified in rationalism, was the work of reflection. Primarily, as I have said, it was psychological.[1] It was born out of the longing after a more intense spirituality, a higher type of morality. Look at Luther, whom obscurantism in France, theologically orthodox, but spiritually dead, denounces as "a monster,"[2] oppressed by the sense of sin, striving to find deliverance from the moral war in the soul, seeking alleviation in penance, in the dogmas of the schoolmen, at Rome itself—the fountainhead of grace, according to the schoolmen. In his struggle for light and peace, Luther is the type of the primitive Protestant, of the soul striving to realise the religious ideal and turning away from the traditional Church, alienated by its gross superstition, its flagrant moral declension, its mechanical religiosity. There were many Luthers in this respect besides the intrepid monk of Wittenberg, who were revolving the same questions and ready to accept the same answers. Protestantism, in a word, was begotten of conscience. Given a society and a Church so degenerate as the Church and society then were, and happily for human nature, this initial Protestant impulse is inevitable. Our moral nature, if capable of terrible de-

[1] The Venetian ambassador Correro, for instance, explains the rapid growth of Protestantism in France from the reaction against clerical immorality. The ministers sent from Geneva had only to expose the immoral conduct of the priests and monks in order to excite the religious revolt of the people. The only security against Protestantism is to reform the clergy (Relations, ii. 130-132).

[2] Journal d'un Bourgeois, 95.

clension, is also capable of the rebound from it. Otherwise the world would be inhabited by brutes, who nevertheless would certainly have a religion, possibly the Christian religion, in its Sorbonnic form.

Examine for a moment the condition of the Church and of society in France about the beginning of the sixteenth century. The Church was merely a profession, a means of living rather than a means of grace, a wealthy corporation whose higher posts were the ambition of impecunious hirelings of noble lineage, or the rewards of royal favourites. Simony, nepotism, pluralities, absenteeism were the natural results. "It is thus," says Lippomano, "that in France, women, children in the cradle, married men, soldiers hold bishoprics, priories, abbeys."[1] The conventional French prelate, in the beginning of the sixteenth century, some good men excepted, was a politician and an ecclesiastic, a courtier and a *bon vivant*, a soldier even, rather than a pastor, withal a hireling and a hypocrite, except perhaps in the matter of women, for he was at no pains to conceal his numerous *affaires de femme*. The laxity of the higher ranks was reflected in that of the lower. As the higher offices were usually reserved for the nobility, the office of curé, or parish priest, was filled by the sons of the peasants. In spite of his education, the curé usually remained a rustic, drank with his peasant parishioners at the *cabaret*, got drunk too, like them, on festival and fair days, was the father of numerous bastards, and saw no inconsistency in thus getting drunk, and begetting children, like any other peasant. There were exceptional cases of attention to pastoral duty and morality, but, as a rule, the curé was anything but a model of temperance. The same might be said of the monks and nuns.[2]

The corruption of the clergy could only have been possible in an age of ignorance and superstition. Ignorant and superstitious the people was to a lamentable extent. Its devotions and its miracles are indicative of the crassest credulity, of extreme intellectual and spiritual abasement. The belief in miracles went so far as to see miracles even in contradictions. Your superstitious believer in miracles is a most illogical person, for what has the will of God to do with human logic?

[1] *Relations des Ambassadeurs Venetiens*, ii. 494. The report is dated 1577, and refers to the condition of the Church at a later time, but it is also retrospective.

[2] For a melancholy picture of the moral declension of the clergy in the first half of the sixteenth century see Relations, ii. 126-130. Correro, like Lippomano, was a staunch Catholic. For illustrative details see also De Maulde, Origines de la Révolution Française au Commencement du XVIme. Siècle, and Journal d'un Bourgeois, 373, 380, 381, etc.

If a crowd of pilgrims happened to be crushed to death by the collapse of the sacred building, it was a miracle; if a church roof fell in when the church was empty, it was equally a miracle. Religious punctilio throve on this credulity. Indulgences, pilgrimages, forms of worship constituted the popular religion, and this religion was too gross to favour scepticism. The peasant constantly saw the devil, the Virgin, the saints, and was consequently all the more assiduous in his religiosity, while oblivious of the moral law. His devotion to the Virgin did not, however, keep him true to his marriage vows, or prevent the multiplication of bastards. In the beginning of the sixteenth century, as the result of the baneful effects of the expedition to Italy on a dissolute soldiery, France was overrun by sexual disease, which ravished villages as well as towns with all the virulence of an epidemic. Moral depravity was widespread, from the highest to the lowest, on the very threshold of the age which was to give its martyrs to France. The sixteenth century is in respect of morality and religious earnestness a century of contrasts, but there was little at its commencement in the life of the people to presage this contrast. "The sixteenth century, the century of religious crises *par excellence*," as M. de Maulde has aptly remarked, "opened precisely with the spectacle of an universal homage to the Holy See, and an unwonted concourse of pilgrims to the tombs of the apostles."[1] There was room for God and for miracles even in the age of a Pope Alexander VI. Alexander and his son Cæsar Borgia believed in God after a fashion, and God was assumed to work miracles even for them![2] Louis XI., too, was the most pious man of his age. Never king was more punctilious in his attendance on the saints and the holy places, though he might not scruple to take his mistresses with him on pilgrimage. But then the age of Louis was the age of François de Paule, that prodigy of an illiterate miracle worker from the mountains of Calabria, whose spells of praying and fasting were stupendous, and whose influence over king and court and people was extraordinary, if not very effective from the moral point of view. It speaks volumes for the force of the new-born religious conviction emanating not from the popular miracle worker, but from the Bible, that it won over so relatively large a proportion of the French people from this debased religious and moral sensualism.

The notorious declension of clerical morality, and its nefarious effects on the people, suggested the necessity of reform. Charles

[1] Origines, p. 52.

[2] See Brantôme, Vies des Grands Capitaines, edited for the Société de l'Histoire de France by Rud. Lalanne, ii. 218.

VIII. contemplated a sweeping amelioration of the Church, beginning with Rome itself, but Charles was too despicable a man to be an effective reformer. Cardinal D'Amboise cherished the same project, and, as the strong minister of Louis XII. and papal legate, was a more likely champion of reform. He attacked the abuses of monastic life, and did not hesitate to use force to compel obedience to his demands, to the length even of expelling the recalcitrant Jacobins of Paris and Rouen.[1] The effect was very transient, however, and in 1511, the year after the cardinal's death, Jean le Maire de Belges, in an impassioned appeal for reform, warned the Church of the danger of resistance, and the necessity for energetic measures to obviate the coming catastrophe. Here and there a solitary voice re-echoed the cry. It was a vain cry. Instead of the reform of discipline, if not of doctrine, desiderated by these precursors of Reformation, Francis promulgated the Concordat of 1517,[2] and shut the official door against all further innovations. The Concordat assumed the supremacy of Pope over Council, recognised the right to first-fruits,[3] and while reserving to the king the right of nomination to vacant bishoprics, gave the Pope the right of investiture. It divided the spoil, and by abolishing the right of election[4] and making the disposal of benefices dependent on the goodwill of Pope and king, enhanced the power of both. Still worse, it tied king and people to traditionalism, as well as shelved the liberties of the Gallican Church, vindicated by the Pragmatic Sanction. Francis lost his main chance of becoming the patron of reform in opposition to Rome and traditionalism. "This Bull," said he to the Chancellor Duprat, "will send both of us to the devil."[5] It identified, at least, the interests of Pope and king, and ostracised Protestantism in advance. Clergy and Parliament might protest on behalf of Gallican liberties, but the Crown, as we have seen, was powerful enough to set their remonstrances at defiance and exact submission. To spiritual natures of the stamp of a Briçonnet and the Maire de Belges, this was a sad consummation. Yet the spiritual nature was to produce great things, in spite of concordats and other devices of officialism. Spiritual natures may be a small minority of force; they may become

[1] See Chroniques de Louis XII. (Jean d'Auton), ii. 219-239.

[2] Isambert, xii. 75-97.

[3] This is not recognised in the Concordat itself, but in a separate Bull Isambert, xii. 98-99).

[4] "Les chapitres . . . ne pourront procéder à l'élection ou postulation du futur prelat" (Isambert, xii. 79).

[5] Relations, ii. 128.

a majority of intensity, and this intensity was to produce tremendous results in France in the near future.

It was already at work, in spite of the fact that the Sorbonne condemned the doctrines of Luther in 1521.[1] Its focus was Meaux, the episcopal seat of William Briçonnet, the mystic prelate around whom gathered a number of earnest students of the New Testament. Among the number were Lefebre d'Étaples, Farel, Gérard Roussel, Pavane, Calvin. The little circle excited the interest and sympathy of Margaret, Francis' humanist sister, who kept up a voluminous correspondence with Briçonnet.[2] Not that Margaret had imbibed the doctrines of the reformer of Wittenberg; but her inclination to mysticism, her dislike of the monks and the Sorbonne, her sympathy with intellectual progress, indisposed her to sympathise with orthodox intolerance. Briçonnet, too, was no confirmed Lutheran. The same could not be said of the bishop's associates, however. Lefebre had drunk in the evangelical spirit and doctrines from the New Testament, which he translated into French, had formed his opinions independent of Luther, and is regarded by the French Protestants as the father of the Reformation, in France at least. The names of Farel, Roussel, and Calvin are the names of the future champions of reform, who were soon to outrun the mysticism of Briçonnet and become the militant antagonists of the traditional creed. The Bishop of Meaux receded before the gathering storm of persecution, condemned Luther in a diocesan synod in 1523, justified himself before the Parliament of Paris from the charge of heresy, and dismissed his more ardent reforming associates. The Queen of Navarre was far less pliable before the intolerance of obscurantist monks, theologians, and lawyers. She afforded the fugitives from Meaux an asylum at her little court at Béarn, aided Roussel in his efforts to evangelise her little kingdom, discarded the mass, celebrated the Lord's Supper in the Protestant form, at least for a time, corresponded with Melancthon,[3] and used her influence with her mother and her brother against persecution.

Louise de Savoy yielded indeed to the exhortations of Pope Clement VII., while acting as regent for her son in 1525, and promulgated a persecuting edict against the adherents of "the damnable sect and heresy of Luther,"[4] but she shielded the heretics as far as

[1] Journal d'un Bourgeois, 95.

[2] See Lettres de Marguerite d'Angoulême, Introduction, 122 *et seq.*

[3] Lettres, 292, where Melancthon addresses to her a recommendation of a French Protestant student.

[4] Isambert, xii. 231 (June 1525).

possible from the persecuting violence of the Sorbonne and the Parliament, and only a couple, who refused to recant, were burned.[1] It was due to her intervention that Louis Berguin, the most notable of these first victims of intolerance, managed to defy his persecutors for three years, and only at last frustrated this powerful protection by his irrepressible zeal.[2] This imprudent zeal, which led some of the votaries of the new creed to outrage the feelings of the orthodox by smashing or disfiguring the images of the Virgin,[3] rendered it difficult for the antagonists of the monks and the persecuting theologians to secure for "the Lutherans," as they were called, the benefit of their conciliatory or humane policy. But the doctors of the Sorbonne could not always allege the outrageous zeal of their opponents in justification of persecution. Merely to differ from their interpretation of the Scriptures, or the Fathers, was damnable error and worthy of death. Nay, Margaret herself was denounced by the fierce zealots of tradition, not merely as a patron, but as an adherent of heresy. The Sorbonne was scandalised at the effrontery of the cultured and enlightened princess who had the hardihood to descant, in very mediocre verse, on matters theological, with reference to purgatory and the saints. The authoress of the "Mirroir de l'Ame Pécheresse" must, therefore, be a heretic, and Dr Noel Béda, syndic of the faculty of theology, must needs bring this enormity to the notice of his fellow doctors. The gallant Francis came to the rescue of his sister, and the good sense of the Bishop of Senlis, who championed her cause before the Sorbonne, cheated Béda and his fellow bigots of their high prey. The fanaticism of the syndic was shortly after bridled by incarceration in Mont St Michel,[4] where he died. Margaret, nevertheless, continued to be the object of the attacks of bigots of this stamp. The Principal of the College of Navarre, baulked in the attempt to make a martyr of her, made her at least the principal figure of a clumsy farce, in which one of his students represented her as a Fury of hell. It was only in deference to her entreaties that the enraged king desisted from his purpose of severely punishing their vulgar hardihood.[5] The intellectual sympathy, the profound affection between brother and sister promised to secure toleration for the hated

[1] See, for instance, *Journal d'un Bourgeois*, who gives valuable information on the first persecutions of the Protestants, 251, 291, 292 *et seq.*

[2] Journal, 375-384: "Mais il fut mis hors à cause que ma dicte dame la Regente en avait escrit à la cour pour sa deliverance et evocqua la cause au grand conseil du Roy." He was burned on the Place de Grève in April 1529.

[3] *Ibid.*, 410 (1530).

[4] See *ibid.*, 453.

[5] See Introduction to Lettres, 56.

Lutherans. For some years the fires of persecution were extinguished. Francis might fail to appreciate the moral earnestness of the sectaries, but he was no bigot, if he was no saint, and heresy had, besides, a political value; which might prove serviceable on occasion against the Emperor and the Pope. He had some thought of bringing about an understanding between the Lutherans and their antagonists, and to this end invited Melancthon to Paris. The project was unfortunately frustrated by the fanaticism of some Protestant zealots, who played into the hands of the enemies of toleration. On the night of the 18th October 1534, one of those audacious placards which were posted up in Paris [1] and other towns, and in which the Eucharist was denounced as a pious fraud, was found affixed to the door of the castle of Blois, where Francis was residing. Who had done this monstrous thing? Those seditious Anabaptists, doubtless, spurners of every law, human and divine. So shrieked the fanatic pulpiteers throughout France, thirsting for the blood of the heretic, and so Francis understood the senseless act. He took it as an insult to his own majesty as well as an act of sacrilege, and determined to make an example of its authors. The result was another savage edict (29th January 1535), denouncing death to all who harboured a heretic, and offering rewards for information against the Lutherans [2] out of their confiscated property. Madame D'Etampes, who shared Margaret's tolerant sympathies, was powerless to mollify the wrath of her royal paramour, the bigoted party who formed the circle of the Dauphin and his mistress Diana being for the nonce in the ascendant. The libertine monarch, suddenly transformed into a pillar of intolerant orthodoxy, was accordingly seen wending his way in holy procession on the 21st January 1535 through the streets of Paris, with court and clergy, to Notre Dame in public protest against the damnable heresy of Luther.[3] This public triumph of orthodoxy over both heresy and humanism was brought to a fitting conclusion by a holocaust of six heretics, in continuation of those which had already gratified the savage zeal of the fanatics.[4] The revolting spectacle was frequently repeated during the next four months.[5] John Calvin, who was living at Paris at this time,[6] might have been one of the victims, but Calvin had taken timely flight, first to Béarn and then to Bâle, whence he (politicly perhaps, but rather inconsistently) dedicated that colossal monument of Protestant logic—the "Institu-

[1] Journal, 441, 442.
[2] Isambert, xii. 402, 403.
[3] Journal, 442-444.
[4] *Ibid.*, 444-447.
[5] For details see Journal, 447-453.
[6] Monty, Réformateurs et Jésuites, 156, 157.

tion of the Christian Religion"—to Francis, as Zwingli had done his "Exposition of the Christian Faith," before him. Calvin's work produced an enormous impression in France, and secured many disciples among the educated classes for the cause of reform.

The report of these atrocities excited the pity of Pope Paul III., who, to his honour, wrote a letter of remonstrance to Francis in the name of Christian charity, and interceded on behalf of clemency. "God, while He was in the world," wrote the Pope, in contrast to the persecuting Bull addressed by his predecessor, Clement, to the regent, "showed compassion rather than harsh justice towards the erring. Severity should never be used in the cause of religion. It is cruel to burn a man alive, and such means will only conduce to injure rather than confirm his faith."[1] It was a noble utterance, and served to recall Francis for a time to the dictates of humanity.[2] Political expediency, too, occasionally stood the Protestants in good stead (Francis being compelled to seek alliances, heretic as well as infidel, in his campaigns against Charles), and there was more talk of fetching Melancthon to Paris to try his dialectic skill on the doctors of the Sorbonne. But the occasional promulgations of persecuting edicts,[3] and the terrible outrage in the Vaudois valleys in 1545, whose horrors were officially sanctioned by a humanist king, showed what the Protestants might expect if Francis' hands were free. Towards the end of his reign he suffered much from an incurable abscess, which scandal mistook for a shameful disease, lost his accustomed buoyancy, yielded more and more to the influence of Cardinal Tournon, and became even more indisposed to brook opposition to his will. In his morbid view heresy came to mean rebellion against the majesty of an absolute Crown as well as against the traditional creed.[4] It was as offensive to the autocrat, in whom the humanist was being ever more absorbed, as it was to the bigot. "Give the people a new religion," said the papal nuncio to the sensitive monarch, "and they will soon demand a new prince."[5] It was, too, spreading at an alarming pace. "The Lutherans," remarked Cavalli in 1546, "are everywhere very

[1] The substance of the letter is given in the Journal d'un Bourgeois, 458, 459. This author is the only authority who has conserved or even noticed it.

[2] Its fruit is seen in the edict permitting fugitive heretics to return on condition of abjuration (Isambert, xii. 405).

[3] See Isambert, xii. 566 (1539); 676 (1540); 785 (1542); 818 (1543).

[4] See the Edict of 1543, Isambert, xii. 818-820. The Protestants are described "comme séditieux et perturbateurs du repos et tranquilité de nostre republique et sujets, et conspirateurs occultes contre la prosperité de nostre estat . . . rebelles et désobéyssans à nous et à nostre justice."

[5] Réformateurs et Jésuites—Guerres de Religion en France, par L. Monty.

numerous, and have possession of entire towns (Caen, Poitiers, La Rochelle, and several cities of Provence), where the Protestant cult is not publicly avowed, but tacitly allowed."[1] The fact might have suggested the wisdom of toleration to a monarch whose better impulses were favourable to a reasonable treatment of religious questions. Unfortunately, toleration was a hard lesson for an autocratic king and an all-powerful Church to learn; difficult, too, for the martyrs of persecution to practise towards a creed which seemed to them damnable superstition. But even in that intolerant age the massacre of innocent men, women, and children in the Vaudois valleys, with the accompaniment of all the horrors which the lust and greed of a brutal soldiery added, is a crime which no philosophy can explain except on the supposition that, with all this parade of zeal for religion, the spirit of Christianity was banished from the bosom of the official Church. It was indeed a melancholy termination of a career, which reached its period shortly after this outrage, and was rendered illustrious by so much intellectual achievement, when Francis sank into the grave on the 31st March 1547, with the stigma of a crime worthy of a savage fetish worshipper attached to his memory.

Had the Protestants a right to expect or demand toleration? On the solution of this question depended most momentous issues for France, present and future. On the ground of tradition, no; on the ground of progress and human right, yes. The orthodox bigots of the Sorbonne and the Parliament might forcibly reason that to question the doctrines of the Church and refuse to conform to its decrees was to violate the law and make the delinquent amenable to punishment. But was the Protestant wrong in appealing to something higher than traditional law in defence of his right to dissent from the Church and its doctors? In other words, are the intellect and the conscience of the individual to be bound by the beliefs and the opinions of the majority in matters of faith? The very idea is so monstrous that it is difficult to realise that 350 years ago, nay, much more recently, nearly every lawyer and theologian in Europe would have answered the question in the affirmative. It did not, unhappily, occur to them that to answer in the affirmative was to deny the law of progress, and sacrifice the principle of liberty to that of a formal uniformity. It did not occur to them that there are times—they are the starting-points in history—when resistance to the established order of things comes to man with all the force of a divine call. The denial of this law of progress was to be fraught with dire consequences to France in particular. It brought, as more immediate

[1] Relations, i. 264.

sequel, a long and tragic drama of civil and religious strife, in which Protestantism wielded a tremendous political influence, and which ended in 1598 in the partial recognition of the rights of conscience over tradition and convention. Unhappily for France, even the partial recognition was by-and-by revoked, and Catholic orthodoxy reigned supreme from 1685 to 1789. What the French people might have permanently secured from a humanist king was only gained temporarily after half a century of bloodshed, to be trampled nearly a century later under the iron heel of an absolute despotism, and only finally gained as the fruit of revolution. In first refusing, and ultimately destroying religious liberty, the rulers of France shut the door against political as well as religious progress. For though orthodox Protestantism was not favourable to true religious liberty, and could accord very well, under certain circumstances, with monarchic despotism, its principle was favourable to both political and religious liberty. To suppress it was, therefore, to retard the political, intellectual, and religious development of the nation, and the day was to come when absolute monarchy was to pay a very dear penalty for this crime and blunder. The very effort to suppress it reacted against the monarchy, for oppression begat resistance—resistance with the pen as well as with the sword. Outraged conscience demanded to know by what right kings presumed to exercise an absolute sway over their subjects? We shall erelong make the acquaintance of the rebellious Protestant political theorist, who in France, as in England, Scotland, and Holland, boldly demolished the fabric of absolute power with texts of Scripture and arguments from history and reason. As in England, Scotland, and Holland, their arguments were to sink deep into the minds of a section of the people, and to contribute their quota to that growing mass of opinion which in the eighteenth century swept away king and throne in the deluge of revolution.

The monarchy and the Church, moreover, by nailing their colours to the masthead of an unprogressive traditionalism, tended to beget another movement, still more fatal in the long run to both. This unprogressive traditionalism intensified the sceptical spirit, which took its rise not from Protestantism (except, perhaps, accidentally), but from humanism. Many of the keenest intellects, who followed the light of reason, quickened by the Renascence and developed by a succession of great philosophers, were alienated by the obscurantism of the clergy, and turned the search light of criticism on Church, politics, society, with results rather surprising, as shall appear in the sequel, to autocratic kings and persecuting prelates.

SOURCES OF THIS CHAPTER.—Isambert, Recueil, t. xi. and xii.; Négociations entre la France et l'Autriche, edited for the Documents Inédits by M. le Glay; Seyssel, Les Louenges du bon Roi de France, edited by Godefroy; Comptes de Dépenses de la Construction du Château du Gaillon, edited by Deville for the Documents Inédits; Chroniques de Louis XII., edited for the Société de l'Histoire de France by De Maulde la Clavière; Histoire du bon Chevalier Bayard in Petitot, t. xxi.; Relations des Ambassadeurs Venetiens, edited by Tommaseo for the Documents Inédits; Négociations de la France dans le Levant, edited for ditto by E. Charrière; Commentaires de Blaise de Monluc, edited for the Société de l'Histoire de France by A. de Ruble; Journal d'un Bourgeois de Paris sous le règne de François I., edited for ditto by L. Lalanne; Bailly, Histoire Financière; Archives Curieuses, edited by Cimber et Danjou, t. ii. and iii.; Journal de Louise de Savoy in Petitot, t. xvii.; Captivité du Roi François I., edited by Champollion-Figeac for the Documents Inédits; Études sur François Premier, par Paulin Paris, 2 vols.; Mémoires de Tavannes in Petitot, t. xxiii.; Lettres de Margaret d'Angoulême, edited for the Société de l'Histoire de France by F. Génin; Humanism under Francis I., article by A. Tilley in English Historical Review, July 1900; Christie's Etienne Dolet; Origines de la Revolution Française au Commencement du XVIme. Siècle; Brantôme, Vies des Grands Capitaines, edited for the Société de l'Histoire de France by Lalanne; Réformateurs et Jésuites—Guerres de Religion, par L. Monty.

## CHAPTER VI.

### Absolute Monarchy under Henry II.—The Repression of the Protestants (1547-1559).

HENRY II., like Louis XI., did not overmuch lament his father, with whom he had lived on bad terms. He resembled Francis in some striking features, for he was well proportioned, and had inherited his love of activity, his knightly prowess, and his affability. He was, too, passionately fond of the chase, shunned no fatigue in following the deer, and was impatient to break a lance against the bravest knight. Though he won no signal victory like the conqueror of Marignano, he had shown his courage on the field of battle, and the campaigns of his reign were more successful than those of his father's. According to Marshal Monluc he was the soldier's king.[1] "The best king for the soldiers who ever commanded in this kingdom." According to the same partial authority he never forgot a service, and did not allow malice to change his opinion of a faithful servant. On the other hand, he never forgot a fault, and could not easily conquer his resentments.[2] While cultivating the virtues of the soldier, he was destitute of his father's intellectual brilliance and sympathies; hated, in fact, mental exertion; and, though more serious, was incapable of appreciating the new intellectual and religious aspirations of his age.[3] Both as man and as ruler he was the pliable tool of his environment, and those who possessed his affections and his will were not the friends of enlightenment, or the disinterested instruments of government. Diana, who became Duchess of Valentinois, was now supreme over her rival, the Duchess D'Etampes, who was compelled to surrender to her the court jewels and vanish into retirement. She maintained her ascendency even after Henry's passion had subsided into friend-

[1] Commentaires et Lettres de Blaise de Monluc, edited for the Société de l'Histoire de France by Alphonse de Ruble, ii. 318.

[2] *Ibid.*, ii. 143.

[3] For a portrait of Henry II. see Cavalli, Relations, i. 286, and cf. Capello, ii. 370-373.

ship—the queen, Catherine de Medici, being a mere nullity,—and this ascendency aggravated the evils of petticoat government, which we have already remarked under Francis. "The government of women," remarks one ungallant chronicler of this period, with special reference to Henry's mistress, "has at all times been fatal to France."[1] Cardinal Tournon and the Admiral D'Annebault, Francis' ministers, had also to make way for the grasping Constable, Anne de Montmorency, and the ambitious Guise family, who had given a queen to Scotland in the second wife of James V., and was allied to the French royal family itself by the marriage of the first duke, Claude (created Duke of Guise by Francis in 1527, in recognition of his military services), to Antoinette Bourbon. Henry's accession was, in fact, a rush for offices and emoluments by the vultures of the commonwealth, to the bitter disgust of those who were left out in the cold. Montmorency grasped for himself and his relatives and dependants the offices of Grand Master and Admiral, in addition to that of Constable, four of the most splendid governments of provinces (Guienne, Languedoc, Isle de France, Provence), a colonelship of infantry (one of the great commands), the captainship of the chief fortresses, and the chief places in the Parliaments. In the hands of the Guises were the governments of Burgundy and Champagne, the chief command of the galleys and the light infantry, and many other important posts in the army.[2] Henry's weakly generosity was merely the milch cow of rapacity, to the sorrow of patriotic men as well as disappointed rivals. "It seemed as if the king," bitterly observes Tavannes, the gruff soldier, who did not understand how to court the ladies, "had conspired with these two families to partition France in their favour, to the ruin of his children and of the kingdom, which supervened, if not during his reign, shortly after."[3] "Those who possessed the king," complains another patriotic writer, who was intimately acquainted with court secrets, "were actuated by the audacious and covetous desire to elevate their families to a flourishing state. Nothing escaped their greedy appetites, as little in truth as the fly escapes the swallow,—positions, dignities, bishoprics, abbeys, every good morsel going were greedily swallowed. In every part of the kingdom they maintained their parasites—fellows without conscience, creatures hired to give them timely notice of those near their end, that they might make suit for their property and even have it confiscated in their favour. Worse

[1] Histoire Particulière de la Cour de Henri II., Archives Curieuses, iii. 282.

[2] Mémoires de Tavannes, Petitot, tom. xxiii. 410; cf. Mémoires de Vielleville, Petitot, xxvi. 165, 185-187.

[3] Mémoires, i. 410, 411.

still, they suborned and bribed the physicians at Paris, where all the great of France lived, to give them warning without fail of the state of their patients who happened to be people of means, and often enough, for a consideration of a thousand crowns or a benefice of a thousand livres, would they put them out of the way. It was thus impossible for this mild prince to practise liberality,—for there were four who devoured him as a lion does his prey, even to the extent of ravishing what he gave to his personal attendants; to wit, Claude, Duke of Guise, who had six children whom he raised high in the world; the Constable, who had also a family to elevate; the Duchess of Valentinois with her daughters and sons-in-law; the Marshal St André, who was surrounded by a host of nephews and poor relations, and had his own greed to satiate. The king was actually under the necessity, when he wished to confer some benefit, to dissimulate his purpose from these dunning parasites, saying that he had already disposed of the affair in question. Even then their impudence did not refrain from disputing the assertion, for they ventured to allege the impossibility of its truth, which contradicted their secret advertisements."[1]

The reign of corruption, bad enough under Francis I., had evidently changed for the worse with the change of king. Henry's kingship was a cloak for the omnipotence of a few highly titled hirelings. Nevertheless, the farce of external royalty was kept up with extraordinary state. The king awakes, and his shirt is brought him by the greatest of the grandees in attendance. With this very select assistance, the king gets into his shirt in the presence of the great courtiers and the nobility—"tous les grands et la plus grande part de la noblesse"—who salute the semi-nude potentate with studied solemnity; royalty, even in its shirt, being, at this period, very imposing. The royal toilet is completed in the presence of this reverent assembly, which witnesses the king's devotions before an altar placed in his bedroom, and then gives place to "the Council of the Morning,"[2] for which the select few remain—Diana being represented by her creature, Blondel,[3] whom she made Treasurer of the Exchequer (*Epargne*) in place of Duval, for the purpose of having a pliant eavesdropper.

Among these "affairs of the morning" are some which afford a

[1] Mémoires de Vielleville, i. 186, 187.

[2] "Conseil des Affaires du Matin," which, according to the Relations des Ambassadeurs Venetiens, was established by Francis I., i. 512. Lippomano says Louis XI. (ii. 506).

[3] See Histoire Particulière, Archives Curieuses, iii. 282.

melancholy commentary on the misgovernment of these mercenary rulers of the people. One of the main articles of commerce of the Aquitanian towns was salt. Their inhabitants drove a lucrative trade in this article with the English, the Dutch, the Germans, before the augmentation of the *gabelle*, or salt tax, by Francis I. That trade had been greatly hampered by the tax and by the oppressions of the swarms of corrupt customs officials that collected it. Each family was bound to make use of a certain quantity annually, and to purchase it at the royal warehouses, at what soon became an exorbitant price. Even then the warehouse-keepers were accused of mixing the salt with sand to increase its bulk. Every family was liable to visits of inspection, and to fine, imprisonment, confiscation in case of failure to purchase the compulsory quantity of this highly taxed, highly priced salt—often of vile quality. The people bore this exaction patiently for a time, for its loyalty, according to contemporary evidence, was not easily provoked into rebellion. It was regarded as the mule, the burden-bearer of the State. "The peasantry," remarked Suriano, "is the class most harshly treated by the king and the privileged orders (*i.e.*, the nobles and the higher clergy). The Emperor Maximilian called the King of France the king of asses, because his subjects bore all kinds of burdens, even in peace, without complaining."[1] Even the patience of the mule is not inexhaustible, however, and the popular anger at last broke out in revolt. In 1548 some of these salt purveyors were slain, and a party of Gascon soldiery having punished this popular outburst with atrocious severity, the peasants of Barbesieux and the neighbouring villages burst open the prison of Chateauneuf and freed the victims of the salt tax tyranny. The King of Navarre, Governor of Guienne, having sent a company of troops to repress the rebels, the whole region sprang to arms, and successfully defied his authority. The cry of "Death to the gabelleurs" resounded far and near, and in response to this cry nearly the whole of south-west France and the islands off the coast rose in revolt. In a few weeks forty thousand men had joined the movement, and the scene enacted at Chateauneuf was repeated all over the country. The insurrectionists did not stop short at battering in the prison doors and freeing the salt smugglers and other inmates. At Saintes and Cognac, for instance, they sacked the houses of the receivers-general and other members of the fiscal hierarchy. Two of these they maltreated in a shocking fashion and pitched into the Charente, near Cognac, with the ironic exhortation, "Go, you damned gabelleurs, salt the fish of the

[1] Relations, i. 486.

Charente." The revolutionary spirit, whetted by pillage, was carried by the peasants of the neighbouring districts to Bordeaux, and soon proved too strong for the governor, Moneins, and the town council to control. Moneins assumed a valiant mien, and tried intimidation. He was interrupted in the midst of his speech by democratic cries against tyranny. At the sound of the tocsin the peasants and the townspeople flocked to arms against the governor and the garrison. Even the president and the councillors of the Parliament, and other high personages, were compelled to doff their robes for pike and sailor cap (*bonnets à la matelote*), and look on at the pillaging of the dwellings of obnoxious gabelleurs. Moneins persuaded himself to try the effect of another speech under the protection of the town councillors. A wiser man would have stayed behind the strong walls of the castle (Chateau Trompette). The luckless orator was cut in pieces in the town house for his pains; the garrison was forced to surrender, and further pillage and massacre gave expression to the rage of the populace, before the more orderly element succeeded in getting the upper hand and restoring tranquillity.

The tidings of this outbreak reached Henry in Piedmont, whither he had gone to receive the homage of his Italian subjects, and inspect his troops. It was a jarring note in the joyous harmony of courtly festivity. Henry, like his father, could enjoy the frivolous amusements of a giddy court, whilst the bulk of the population of a large district of his kingdom was being maddened by hunger and injustice into a rising in self-defence. The jar in the joyous dream of those advent days roused the ire of the monarch and the gay gentlemen who accompanied him, and drank in enjoyment in sunny Italy. It is something damnable (to quote the gay gentlemen) that a grandee's holiday should be spoiled in this outrageous fashion. Wine, women, music, beautiful skies, and all that sort of gentlemanly diversion in abundance, if that cursed *canaille* of Bordeaux, Saintes, Cognac, etc., would only hunger and eat their saltless pottage in peace. Fierce are their fury and their thirst for vengeance, these rebels having apparently neither stomachs nor souls in the eye of a grand seigneur enjoying himself so deliciously at Turin. "Exterminate the vermin," growls Montmorency, hardened by his experience in Provence, which he formerly laid waste to arrest the progress of the imperialists. "People the country with a more loyal population. With a few hundreds of these veterans hardened in Italian warfare, and a few hundred more German landsknechts, I could root them out ever so expeditiously to your majesty's entire satisfaction."[1] So Montmorency. Henry, though

[1] Mémoires de Vielleville, Petitot, xxvi. 261, 262.

angry; was not cruel. He did not rise to the occasion and contented himself with despatching Montmorency from Lyons, and Francis of Guise, eldest son of Duke Claude, and at this period Duke of Aumale, at the head of two detachments, to punish the rebels, with instructions to eschew pillage and perpetrate no cruelties. The Constable took the road to Toulouse, Aumale to Poitiers, scattering the peasantry by the very report of their advance, and subsequently joining near Pujols, between the Garonne and the Dordogne, preliminary to attacking Bordeaux. The crestfallen citizens strove to disarm the animosity of the Constable by sending a ship, bearing his arms and gorgeously furnished, to bring him to the town. The Constable was too eager for vengeance to be mollified by this act of courtesy, or moved by the harangue of the orator of the citizen deputation. He would not, he growled, enter by gate or harbour, for he had in his train (twenty pieces of artillery) wherewith to open him a door. He took indeed a terrible revenge, oblivious of the royal instructions. A veritable reign of terror followed his entry as unchallenged conqueror. The most horrible tortures were meted out with a relentless hand. "More than a hundred and forty persons suffered terrible deaths," wrote an eye-witness,[1] some being hanged, others decapitated, broken on the wheel, impaled, torn in pieces by four horses, burned, while three were treated to a new sort of torture, being malloted, or smashed by an iron club into a pulp, and then thrown into the fire, the executioner finishing his bloody work with the exclamation, "Go, you mad *canaille*, roast the fish of the Charente which you have salted with the bodies of the officers of your king and sovereign lord." By the Constable's command the body of Moneins was disinterred, and carried by the town councillors, followed by the citizens, with every mark of mourning and contrition, to the choir of the cathedral of St Andrew. The councillors were further compelled to burn the charters of the rights and privileges of the city with their own hands, and pay a fine of 200,000 livres. The bells of the churches were removed, and the town house destroyed. Equal barbarity was practised against the inhabitants of the neighbouring districts, two of their leaders being crowned with red-hot iron crowns and broken on the wheel. Finally, justice and gentlemanly *amour propre* being sufficiently honoured by these brutalities, the privileges of Bordeaux were shortly after restored, and the *gabelle* commuted for a payment of 1,200,000 livres by the rebellious provinces.[2] This act

[1] Mémoires de Vielleville, Petitot, xxvi. 264.

[2] See Archives Curieuses, iii. 365, 368; Vielleville, Mémoires, Petitot, xxvi. 261-265.

of grace only made the tax more burdensome for the non-exempted districts.

The horrible visitation left its mark not only on the memories of the time; it called forth an impassioned protest against the tyranny of kings, which is remarkable as the first literary expression, in France, of the anger of an outraged people. It was not written by one of the people, but by an educated man, who to the culture of letters added the verve of public spirit and an intense sympathy with popular suffering. The author was a councillor of the Parliament of Bordeaux, the beloved friend of his fellow-councillor Montaigne, and like him an ardent disciple of the wisdom and poetry of classic antiquity. It is all the more significant on this account, for in this respect it anticipates the eighteenth century, is an earnest of a time when injustice and inhumanity were to find their aggressor in the highest intellect and soul of France. I refer to the "Contre Un," or "Discours sur la Servitude Volontaire"[1] of La Boëtie. It is a juvenile production, for it was written at the age of twenty-two. It is more philippic than philosophy—belligerent, doctrinaire, and intolerant, but instinct with justice and sympathy. In its appeal to nature against convention, it is a most remarkable anticipation of Rousseau, though it lacks the logical acumen, the systematic grasp of the "Contrat Social." Even Rousseau did not preach against the tyranny and convention of his age with more passion and eloquence, if with more logic and depth. But then Rousseau was elaborating a mere theory, La Boëtie was striking a blow at the terrible misgovernment of his time, with the brutal tyranny of a Montmorency before his eyes. So understood, his philippic has a far greater interest than its hostile critics, who have read it without reference to the events at Bordeaux, will allow—the interest, not of a political treatise, but of a passionate protest against injustice and oppression, reeking with the blood of the people. To be understood, it must be read in the light of these events, and as a denunciation of them its language is none too strong. It is more denunciatory than practical, and rouses the revolutionary spirit without providing a remedy for abuses; for moral generalities are not political remedies. It is nevertheless a message for the times, and was in this respect, in some measure, a remedy; for its spirit, if not its matter, will yet move the world with the impulse of revolution.

How a million of men can submit to the absolute *régime* of a king, especially a bad king, is what La Boëtie, like most reasonable beings, cannot understand. That men out of gratitude for some benefit should place one of themselves in a position in which he

[1] Published in the series of the Bibliothèque Nationale.

might do them untold harm, shows a lamentable want of foresight To remain in subjection and suffer every species of wrong is worse than cowardice. If a man were to announce this voluntary servitude as hearsay, and not as a fact, patent to all, nobody would believe him. The people is the author of its own slavery, for to recover its liberty, it has merely to will its freedom. Liberty, it would seem is not a blessing desired by man, for though he has but to desire in order to attain it, he prefers to remain in an effeminate slavery Be resolute to serve no longer, and you will be free. If this seems paradoxical, it is because, cries La Boëtie, the love of liberty, the most natural of sentiments, has been so long stifled by bondage, that it has ceased to seem natural. Nevertheless, man is born in subjection only to his parents and to reason. Nature has given the same form to all in order that all may realise their brotherhood. If there is any advantage in individual ability, it ought only the more to foster fraternal affection between man and man by enabling the strong to minister to the necessities of the weak. Nature has ordained society, companionship for man, not the oppression of the weak by the strong. Liberty is therefore natural. Long live liberty! The kingship in any form—whether obtained by election, succession, or conquest—appears to La Boëtie, who has in his view the absolute sway of a Henry II., equally hostile to liberty. The king who has been elected strives to affirm his power at the expense of liberty the king by succession regards the people as his natural slaves; the conqueror as his prey. A man born unaccustomed to modern subjection would certainly instinctively prefer to obey his reason rather than any other man. Men become slaves only by constraint and deception, never by natural impulse. At first they usually deceive themselves in this matter, to discover speedily that they have been and are being duped. So apt are they to mistake for nature what they owe only to their birth, to mistake custom, which teaches servitude, for nature, which teaches freedom. Nature unfortunately loses her power the less she is cultivated. As a plant may be transformed by engrafting some foreign twig on its stem, so human nature may be entirely distorted by custom. Custom, then, is the first cause of this voluntary servitude, in which men seem to live so naturally. Happily there are exceptions even to the power of custom. Such exceptions are the men "who, possessed of strong intelligence and insight, are not content, like the great mass, to regard what is before their eyes, but look beyond and behind them, studying the past in order to measure the present and gauge the future." To such, slavery is not natural and its taste never sweet, however artfully it may be

gilded. Education and freedom of thought are the enemies of tyrants. It is the interest of the tyrant to enervate the people, rather than enlighten them, and it is the tendency of the subjects of a tyrant to lose all the masculine virtues of natural freedom. Long live the king, cry the people, in return for the spectacles, free dinners, and largesses of the tyrant. They bless Tiberius and Nero for their liberality, and forget that they are being bribed with their own substance, and will be called on to-morrow to surrender their property in order to satisfy the avarice, their children to satisfy the passions of these magnanimous emperors. Credulity grows with effeminacy, and the tyranny of kings is invested with the miraculous by the ignorance of the mass. The people themselves help to give currency to the lies they believe, for the profit of the monarch. Moreover, the tyrant finds ready adjuncts in the passions, the avarice, the egotism of many of his subjects who find their advantage in his service and their own slavery.

From all which, it is evident that this ardent youth, who pours forth the outraged feelings of a high and generous spirit, gives expression to what many sage men have uttered in less feverish language, and what every independent soul, not enslaved by convention, feels in the presence of the arrogance of individual power. It is refreshing reading even now, when the arrogance, if not the tyranny of individual power is not altogether unknown in high places at times, and there must have been many in that crushed, bleeding Bordeaux to whom it would have been welcome, and, in some sort, comforting reading, had La Boëtie only had the courage to send it to the printer. It was written in 1548; it was not published till 1578, long after its author's decease, for the promise of a brilliant career was cut short by a premature death. His death was the great sorrow of Montaigne's life. The friendship of these two men is a singular fact. There is a vast contrast between the passionate enthusiast for liberty, justice, equality, and the sceptical egoist, who was one of the greatest of essayists, but assuredly no ardent theorist or reformer. It is impossible to imagine Montaigne growing enthusiastic for an idea, if the idea involved the slightest disturbance of his surroundings. How much less enthusiastic for a revolution. How he must have smiled sardonically and shrugged his shoulders at this passionate protest against the course of things! And yet the author of the "Discourse on Voluntary Servitude" was the most sympathetic man that Montaigne had met, the man whose death he mourned to the end of his days. Strange and subtle affinity of contraries, whose attraction he has touchingly expressed.

"It was because it was he; it was because it was I." Otherwise, Montaigne had no love of theorists, eschewed politics, and had a horror of revolutions as equally ruinous to the State and to their authors. He was a staunch royalist, though not a courtier, condemned in fact courtly arts as incompatible with independence and honesty. He would have liberty to think and write, and was a forerunner of Descartes in advocating independence of thought. Take nothing on trust, but form an independent judgment, was with him a maxim. Nature was for him, as for La Boëtie and Rousseau, the great teacher. "The great world is the mirror in which we must look." Aristotle and mere bookish knowledge are of far less account than knowledge of men and things. Inquire of all men, and learn from the workman, the cowherd, the casual traveller. Learn, too, from history, and seek to know especially the reasons of events rather than the events themselves, not the place where Manlius died, but rather why it was a breach of duty for him to have died there. The faculty to judge historical fact is superior to the mere knowledge of such fact. The grand aim of education is to enable the pupil "to taste, choose, and discriminate things for himself, sometimes opening the way for him, sometimes leaving him to open it for himself." Evidently the author of "Emile" owed much to the author of the Essays. Montaigne is the apostle of intellectual progress by free self-development, untrammelled by tradition in religion, education, philosophy; and there was, after all, ample room for close affinity between him and his friend. Nevertheless, in politics, he is staunchly conservative—a phenomenon illustrated in the case of other progressive thinkers besides Montaigne. "In public affairs there is no system so bad, provided it be of long standing and firmly established, that is not better than change and alteration. . . . It is very easy to accuse a government of imperfection, for all things human are full of it; it is very easy to beget in any people a contempt for ancient ordinances; no man ever yet attempted it but he succeeded. But to set up a better constitution in place of that which has been destroyed, very many have foundered who have undertaken it." This is a cautious, but it is essentially a lazy judgment, and the modern world has happily not followed Montaigne as its mentor in things political. Can't you let it alone for fear of worse, is a poor political gospel for a world with so many wrongs to rectify, so many aspirations to satisfy. He was not in sympathy with either political or religious contention, for to him the principle of all this contention is wrong. People dispute from the spirit of contradiction, rather than for the sake of

truth. This is especially true of religious disputes, and to the red-hot controversialist of either side, he would say, "Trouble not the world with your quarrels, especially not me, for you know little or nothing about the matter, and I would live in peace." There was no little common-sense in this view, and the warring theologians might have done well to pause in their rabid abuse of each other, and consider religion from a more philosophic point of view. Which the rabid theologian will not do, then or now, in spite of the teaching of science and time, the rabid theologian being in all ages the unique depositary of divine knowledge. Nevertheless, there is some measure of intellectual life, of the spirit of inquiry even in these religious disputes, and however much Montaigne might dislike the matter of them, he ought to have perceived the fact that this turmoil in the religious world might be at least the beginning of good by quickening the critical spirit, which was strong within himself. More especially ought he to have seen that the application of it to politics must have salutary effects for humanity, if only in view of the fact that his own countrymen were paying a terrible price, in corruption and misery, for their long habit of leaving politics in the hands of absolute kings and the mercenary tribe of place hunters. But no, Montaigne is willing for his own peace, and that of mankind, that things should remain so, and leaves the world to make the best of it in resignation. Yet he is a revolutionist in spite of himself. The free self-development of the individual is incompatible with political stagnation, and the freethinker and critic were destined to stir the world. Freedom from prejudice and from servility to tradition, of which Montaigne is the apostle—fruit of the intellectual Renascence, as we have observed—will yet produce some startling political results in France and elsewhere.[1]

The statute-book contains no measures tending to redeem the reign of Henry from the charge of glaring oppression and corruption. The main solicitude of the king and his ministers was apparently to suck every available sou out of the people. To this end they aggravated the vicious financial expedients of Francis, particularly the sale and creation of offices, to which the Parliament offered a vain resistance. These vicious financial edicts and the *lettres de jussion*, or royal orders to the Parliament to register them, form by far the most numerous of the enactments of the reign.[2] It would seem in fact that the king and his advisers were so busy harassing the

[1] For Montaigne see, besides the Essays, M. de Stapfer's volume in Les Grands Écrivains Français, and Nisard's Histoire de la Litterature Française, i. 425-458.

[2] See Isambert, t. xiii.

people by raising loans and multiplying impositions and offices to satiate the greed of the courtiers, and pay for the war with Charles V., that they had hardly time for any important legislative measures, except an occasional direction for the extirpation of heretics. These edicts, which show so little consideration for the bodies of the subjects, and so much for their souls, form a curious combination. The corrupt bigots of the court were nothing if not orthodox.

Though an execrable administrator, Henry II. pursued a strong foreign policy, in continuation of the struggle with Charles V. The Constable and the Guises were forcible, if corrupt statesmen, and in their strong hands Henry decidedly scored in his relations with foreign potentates. He intervened successfully against the Protector Somerset's policy of uniting England and Scotland by the marriage of Mary of Scots to Edward VI., secured her hand for his son, the Dauphin Francis, cemented the Franco-Scottish alliance, and compelled Warwick, Somerset's successor, to cede Boulogne and waive further interference in Scottish affairs (Treaty of 24th March 1550). He was equally successful in checking the emperor, whom the death of Francis I. and Henry VIII. seemed to have left without a rival, and who now saw within his grasp the fruits of thirty years of struggle —the suppression of the Lutheran heresy and the consolidation of the imperial power. The defection of Maurice of Saxony spoiled all, and in bringing about this defection, Henry had no little share. The Treaty of Friedwald (January 1552), by assuring the co-operation of Henry in the ostensible endeavour to free the empire from a "brutal, insupportable, and perpetual servitude," decided Maurice to complete the perfidious *rôle* which he had begun as the ally of Charles, and which he finished as his triumphant enemy. The unsuspecting emperor was at last caught in the meshes of that underhand diplomacy of which he was a rare master, and barely escaped over the Alps, while Henry took provisional possession of Toul, Metz, and Verdun, with the determination, of course, to make it permanent. A master stroke of policy, which gave France, under the pretext of rescuing the empire from oppression, a considerable addition of territory and a stronger eastern frontier. The fabric of Charles' power seemed to have fallen in a single night, and he awoke from his dream of imperial supremacy to find the empire and nearly all Europe leagued against him. Catholic and Lutheran, Calvinist and Anglican (Warwick, too, being minded to join the league), nay, even the Turk, were ready to close in on the man who had seemed to dictate to Europe the behests of his imperial will. There was nothing for it but to agree to the Peace of Passau (August 1552)

in order to be able to cope with Henry, who was bent on extending his eastern frontier, if possible, to the Rhine. The powerful army with which he advanced to Metz was foiled by the skill of Duke Francis of Guise, the heroism of the French garrison, and the severity of the weather, which wrought awful havoc in the ranks of the besiegers, and after forty-five days of vain cannonading and aimless suffering, Charles was compelled to desist. "I perceive," said he bitterly, "that Fortune is a female. She loves a young king more than an old emperor."[1] His indomitable spirit would not recognise defeat, however, and the war lasted several years longer, and embraced Italy as well as France and the Netherlands. It was interrupted by the truce of Vaucelles (5th February 1556) and the abdication of Charles in the same year. The truce lasted scarcely five months instead of the stipulated period of five years. Henry, inspired by the Guises, was again the aggressor.[2] Pope Paul IV., the octogenarian and bellicose Caraffa, the true successor of Julius II. in his ambition, his Italian patriotism, his energy, his warmth of temper, turned, in his anxiety to expel the Spaniard from Italy, and enhance his temporal power, to the Guises. His ambition and his policy fitted admirably those of Duke Francis and his brother, the Cardinal of Lorraine. The former hoped to win the crown of Naples, the latter the tiara, in succession to the aged Pope, as the reward of French co-operation. Their influence, seconded by the Duchess of Valentinois, prevailed over that of the Constable, and the weakly Henry committed himself to the will-o'-the-wisp policy of an expedition to Naples, which had seduced the imagination of Charles VIII. In spite of conscientious scruples, Philip II. had no alternative but to send the Duke of Alva, Viceroy of Naples, with an army into the Pope's dominions. Alva drove the papal militia like sheep before him, but abstained from attacking Rome, and by consenting to a truce of forty days, gave the Pope a chance of profiting by the approach of the Duke of Guise. The duke was, in fact, marching in hot haste with a considerable force through Piedmont and Lombardy to the rescue. He found the Pope unscathed, indeed, but found not the reinforcements which Paul had promised to have in readiness. He pushed on, nevertheless, towards Naples, the vision

[1] For the siege of Metz and the suffering endured by the imperial army, see Mémoires de Vielleville, Petitot, xxvii. 102; the account of an eye-witness in Archives Curieuses, iii. 119-138; and the description by Salignac in Petitot, xxxii.

[2] Marillac, Archbishop of Vienne, attempts to lay the blame for the renewal of hostilities on Philip II., but his reasons are not convincing (Archives Curieuses, iii. 171-201).

of a throne, with which Paul's nephew, Cardinal Caraffa, lured him on,[1] quickening his steps. His progress was retarded by the stubborn defence of the garrison of Civitella, and the prospect of the Neapolitan throne vanished before the approach of Alva with a superior force, and the necessity of retreat to Rome.[2] Here he received the urgent command of his master to desist from his quixotic enterprise and recross the Alps straightway. "Go, then," burst out the irascible Pope, forgetful of his own intromissions, "so be it; you have accomplished little enough for the service of your king, still less for the Church, and nothing at all for your own honour."

There was grave reason for this urgent recall, for Henry discovered that he had reckoned without his host in rousing the enmity of Philip, and at the same time sending his best troops across the Alps. Philip had threatened his doting spouse of England into a declaration of war against Henry,[3] and, in defiance of his marriage obligations, obtained a contingent of English troops. These raised his motley army to 45,000 men, under the command of Duke Philibert of Savoy, who, during the absence of Guise, had invaded France, laid siege to St Quentin, and inflicted a terrible blow to French prestige in the battle of that name (10th August 1557). Before the resistless charge of Egmont's cavaliers, the French army was almost annihilated, the Duke of Enghien, brother of the King of Navarre, being killed, and the Constable, Marshal St André, and many more distinguished noblemen, taken prisoners. The Duke of Savoy had only to pursue the fugitive remnant in order to reach Paris, and dictate terms in the capital. Philip hesitated to take this energetic course. The remembrance of the failure of the Spanish invasion of Provence, and his cautious nature, held him back. He lingered over the effort to reduce St Quentin, while Charles waited impatiently for the news of the capture of Paris, and Henry was exerting himself to bar the road with a fresh force, and finally disbanded an army which he was unable to pay.

The capture of Calais in the beginning of January 1558 contributed to efface both the humiliation of St Quentin and the failure of the Italian expedition of Guise, who was the hero of the exploit. The popular joy over the recovery of the last stronghold of English dominion in France was, however, damped by the second crushing blow which Egmont dealt to a French army at Gravelines on the

[1] See Mémoires de Vielleville, Petitot, xxvii. 318-320.

[2] *Ibid.*, 320; the Mémoire du Voyage de M. le Duc de Guise en Italie, par Cl. de Chastre, Petitot, xxxii.

[3] 7th June 1557; see Archives Curieuses, iii. 215-218.

13th July.[1] This disaster and the exhaustion of his treasury, in spite of a grant of three million crowns by an assembly of the Notables, emphasised the necessity of peace. France had sacrificed its last sou to the genius of war and corruption, and a debt of thirty-eight millions of livres encumbered the royal budget. The government had reached the limit of extortion,[2] and was fain to send the Constable, the Cardinal of Lorraine, and the Marshal St André to Cercamps to begin negotiations with Philip's representatives, the Duke of Alva, William of Orange, and Granvella, Bishop of Arras. Philip's terms were very exacting. He demanded the restitution of Metz, Toul, and Verdun to the empire, the Vermandois to the Low Countries, Savoy, Piedmont, Sienna, Corsica, and other Italian territories in the hands of the French, finally Thionville and Calais. Ultimately, after separate negotiations with Elizabeth of England, and the Emperor Ferdinand had secured the retention of the three bishoprics and Calais by France, the Constable and the cardinal agreed at Cateau Cambresis to renounce Savoy and the greater part of Piedmont as well as abandon the Italian allies of France.[3] The fruit of the Italian policy of four successive French kings was thus blasted by a stroke of the pen, and the essential weakness of the government of corruption and extortion revealed to the nation in the bitter object-lesson of national humiliation. Two years before, Henry seemed on the point of reaping the harvest of sixty years of misdirected effort. At Cateau Cambresis the harvest was blighted, as it were, overnight. Yet, if the loss of Bresse and Savoy was a legitimate subject of national chagrin, the French policy of annexing Italy, for which so much blood and treasure had been wasted for nearly three generations, was as mistaken as the English policy of annexing France. The Alps were as much the real boundary of France as the Channel was of England. The military men and the patriots were loud in denunciation of the galling transaction. Even M. de Vielleville, who takes much credit to himself for persuading the king to enter on peace negotiations, ventured to remonstrate against the cession of a conquest which had cost forty millions of crowns and the lives of a hundred thousand men.[4]

[1] Vielleville blames Guise for retarding the siege of Thionville, and thus contributing to this disaster (Mémoires, Petitot, xxvii. 339, 340). These memoir writers are not always impartial judges. Monluc does not mention Vielleville, who would have managed matters better, and praises himself and Guise (Commentaires, Petitot, xxi. 456, 457).

[2] For the exhausted state of France consequent on this financial oppression, see Rélations des Ambassadeurs Venetiens, ii. 407.

[3] See Treaty in Isambert, xiii. 515-528.

[4] Mémoires, Petitot, xxvii. 407-411.

Monluc, who took an active part in these events, was equally disconsolate.[1] Brissac, another of these fire-eating marshals, who would fain keep his foot on Italy, was still more inconsolable, while the Duke of Guise joined in the universal anger all the more sincerely that it directed itself against the hapless Constable. Verily, the military men do not always gauge the possible in politics, or appreciate the true interests of their country. Their thirst for glory had cost France dear, and France was yet to pay a heavy sacrifice to the blind egotism of kings and marshals of this quixotic stamp. Militarism was, in consequence, to contribute its quota to the revolutionary spirit of the future.

The growth of Protestantism in the reign of Henry II. was phenomenal, in spite of the persistent efforts to uproot it. The Protestant conscience became a fact of enormous significance, which exercised a vast influence, both political and religious, on France for fully a century to come. In the reign of Henry its political influence was still small. It was still a spiritual movement with great political possibilities, but the intensity of its spirituality was already a power to be reckoned with by both monarch and Church. The Protestant creed was to its votaries a new revelation, a divine message which rendered compromise or retraction impossible, and braved royal decrees, inquisitions, tribunals, ecclesiastical and secular, *chambres ardentes*, and even the stake. When a simple workman—court tailor by profession—could face the spectacle of majesty itself with flashing eye, and even dare to denounce the royal mistress in the royal presence in words of scathing indignation,[2] it is evident that the Protestant cause would be hard to kill. Even his majesty winced before the impassioned gaze of the bold tailor, which haunted him day and night for some time thereafter. In that resolute look there is an intensity of soul which is working a revolution; its defiance is more terrible than the tramp of a whole army, and woe to him that would repress it. It is, in fact, past repression. Protestantism asked for toleration, and being at this stage a consuming spiritual fire, it could not temporise without accounting itself guilty of abjuring God and conscience. Nay, its very nature is to seek not merely toleration but domination, and therefore it is all the more militant and irrepressible. It tends to nurture self-consciousness, to make a man feel

[1] Commentaires (ed. Ruble), ii. *318*, *319*.

[2] "Madame," dit il, "contentez vous d'avoir infecté la France, et ne metez votre ordure parmi chose si sacrée qui est la verité de Dieu" (Histoire Ecclésiastique des Eglises Réformées au Royaume de France, erroneously attributed to Theodore de Bèze, i. 50. It was, however, written under his supervision).

himself to be a man, with a cause to champion and rights to defend. The docility of the French is the fact that strikes the Venetian ambassadors of the first half of the sixteenth century; their restiveness, their self-assertiveness strike those of the second half. "It is a strange epoch this," muses Giovanni Correro in 1569; "every one presumes much of himself; whatever he imagines, he boldly demands, and if he does not obtain it at once, he sets up a great clamour."[1] Authority is disputed, resisted, attacked, overthrown. The sceptre is no longer the emblem of power, of reverent obedience. The monarch seems to exist on sufferance. The universal license of thought and action is to some extent due to the fact that the king, the government is weak; it is also due to the genius of Protestantism, which has awakened conscience, and quickened the sense of right. Nay, according to the ambassador, it has affected the national character. "The people of France has hitherto been regarded as gentle and worth almost nothing for war, with the exception of the Gascons, who have always borne a martial reputation. At present it is not so. In this war of religion, which affects everybody, all France has taken arms, and blood flows in abundance. On this account they have become emboldened and courageous."[2] The root of the evil lies, according to the same authority, in the fact that adequate repressive measures had not been taken from the beginning. Surely Francis I. had shed heretic blood enough, at any rate at Paris and in those Vaudois valleys? The ambassador is apparently not aware that conscience and not force is the true mistress of the world. Conscience, however, is, according to the apologists of absolute kings and traditional creeds, the monopoly of the established Church and the doctors of the Sorbonne and the Parliament. The Protestant is a heretic, and has no right to a conscience, so long as the Sorbonne and the Parliament are the arbiters of religious belief, and have the right and the power to burn him. This is the view, too, of partisan Romanist historians, who are never tired abusing these rascally, perfidious "Lutherans," though they ought to know better by this time. It is a vain pretension, and means simply that what is orthodox according to Pope and priest is eternal and immutable. Happily this pretension has not succeeded in stifling religious and intellectual progress, based not on the impregnable rock of St Peter, but on the eternal rock of conviction. It did not succeed in France for nearly a century and a half at least, did not succeed ultimately either, for the Protestant was resolved to fight for his convictions, fight, too, all the forces of both monarchy and Church; and

[1] Relations, ii. 156. [2] *Ibid.*, ii. 148.

the Protestant spirit of individual right to think and worship untrammelled by tradition was to triumph in the end, triumph through revolution, in spite of long struggle and semi-triumphant repression. Its triumph was a triumph for humanity, though theological Protestantism might have been less intolerantly aggressive at times, and less unfaithful to its own spirit. But then it was at this stage war to the knife between two opposing systems, and certainly that system which acted on persecuting principles wherever it got the chance, had no right to accuse the aggressive system of its opponents, which at first, at least, was compelled to fight and suffer for its existence.

While hostile to this intolerant creed by force of conviction and necessity, Protestantism was not necessarily hostile to the monarchy. It might, and did by-and-by, tend this way in France, as did Roman Catholicism itself in the latter half of the sixteenth century, and the Venetian ambassador, looking at events at this later time, was struck by the fact. "Princes who know their interests," remarks Correro, "will do their utmost to keep their kingdoms free from the new religious movement, for one has never seen a change of creed that has not been followed by political change."[1] The religious sentiment has been both the most effective ally and the most formidable opponent of the secular power. If it has helped to confirm the monarchy, it has also contributed most powerfully to modify or undermine it. It has been the means of great political changes, because it has lent the inspiration of a higher power to the contention on behalf of human right. Even in cases where men have fought for political freedom and progress without its aid, they have only done so effectively when stirred by an inspiration, a devotion analogous to those derived from the religious sentiment. Great political movements have only succeeded when a political idea has become a sort of religious creed. Nevertheless, official Protestantism was by no means inimical to monarchy. Had not Calvin dedicated his "Institution" to Francis I., and paid due honour to the secular authority as ordained of God? Luther, too, was assiduous in his homage to his princely protectors, and very severe in his condemnation of the insurrectionary peasants whom oppression maddened into resistance. And in certain Protestant countries the sovereign found it his subservient ally, the champion of his power. To Henry II., however, the Protestant that would dare to dispute the right of authority, civil and ecclesiastical, to coerce the conscience, was the nurse of sedition—"the enemy of all monarchy and

[1] Relations, ii. 138.

principality, the source of all confusion."[1] That it is damnable error is bad enough. That it is inimical to absolute monarchy (which it really was in principle, if not at first in practice), and is the mother of anarchy, is monstrous crime. To Diana, and the parasites of a corrupt court, its persecution would, moreover, cover many sins and earn them a tolerable passage through purgatory and a saintly reputation till then.[2] To whet their zeal there was the confiscation of the property of heretics.[3] Nor was there wanting an element of fanaticism pure and simple, in spite of the lax morals of churchmen, to raise the cry of "Death to the heretics." Hence the establishment of a special chamber in the Parliament of Paris—the *Chambre ardente*—for the trial of heretics. Hence, too, the edict of the 19th November 1549 for the repression of sectaries "whose errors and damned opinions contain in themselves the crime of *lèse majesté*, divine and human, sedition of the people, and the perturbation of our kingdom and the public repose"—in short, are treasonable and pestilential, and must be extirpated. The ecclesiastical judges were enjoined to take cognisance of heresy pure and simple, but in cases where it was connected with civil offences—sedition or popular commotions—the ecclesiastical were to act in conjunction with the civil judges. The former might not, however, levy fines on heretics—there being too many greedy courtiers on the outlook for these fines—but they might claim the assistance of the secular officers in execution of the sentences which they were empowered to pass.[4] While repressing the heretics, the court, particularly the Cardinal of Lorraine, urged the monarch to sanction the establishment of the Jesuits at Paris, in spite of the remonstrances of the Parliament and the Sorbonne, still zealous for the Gallican liberties,[5] and the ultimate refusal of the Parliament to register the edict in favour of the Society. While the Parliament feared the presence of these knights-errant of Ultramontanism, it was sound in the faith for the most part, and registered approvingly another formidable edict,[6] of date June 1551, against its subverters. By this fresh edict the powers and

[1] Hist. Ecclés., i. 44. The seditious spirit of Protestantism is emphasised in all the edicts of Henry II. for its suppression; see Isambert, xiii.

[2] "Le vrai moyen de couvrir devant Dieu et les hommes tous les vices . . . etait d'exterminer les adversaires de la religion romaine" (*Ibid.*, i. 44).

[3] Vielleville takes credit to himself for having refused to participate in these confiscations, which were a rich booty to court parasites. See Mémoires, Petitot, xxvi. 299-302.

[4] Isambert, xiii. 134-138.

[5] *Ibid.*, xiii. 178, 179.

[6] *Ibid.*, xiii. 189-208. The moderate Olivier had meanwhile been discharged from the office of chancellor in favour of Bertrand, a pliant tool of the court.

procedure of the judges, civil and ecclesiastical, were further emphasised and extended. In spite of former repressive measures, the infection, it seems, had spread to many towns and villages, the majority of whose inhabitants, including men and women of all classes, and even the children, being infected by the poison. Books from Geneva and Germany had imported and spread the malady. No good Christian and good subject might, therefore, import or read such, and those who possessed any work condemned by the Sorbonne must deliver it up forthwith. No printer might print a translation of the Bible, or any theological work not sanctioned by the Paris, or other theological faculty, on pain of confiscation of life and goods. Printing offices and booksellers' shops were liable to visits of inspection, in Lyons particularly, where the commerce in foreign books was very active. No pedlar might carry or sell books on any condition, since many have been poisoned by the Geneva rabies, hidden among their wares. The edict even took the saints under its protection, no caricature, no breaking of images being permissible. This anxiety to guard against the influence of heretic literature is remarkable. It shows the power of the press as an agent of new ideas, and our contemporary observer had noted the fact of which the edict affords indirect evidence. "It is especially needful," remarks Correro, "to have a care of those little books which they diffuse. They are like a charm thrown by an enemy who is unable to do harm by the spoken word. Men are naturally curious, and even without evil intention they open these books, they read, and finding therein a burning language and plenty of citations from Scripture, they do not reflect that these passages are false or mutilated, and their minds are captivated."[1] Absolute monarchy and obscurantism have ever dreaded the power of books, for books perhaps more than men have been the great revolutionists. A gospel is never really powerful till it is written, or, in these modern times, printed, and against the printer the absolute king is assuredly on the losing side, at least in the long run. Men in this sixteenth century yield to this fascination of the printed word, and read with avidity and profit, pains and penalties notwithstanding. Reason and heart will strive to emancipate themselves from priestly or royal domination, as soon as that domination has become bondage and corruption, and the appeal is borne, in its millions of books, from the press to the intelligence and the conscience of men. In vain, therefore, are the remaining paragraphs of this edict, exhorting to

[1] Relations, ii. 138.

zeal in persecution and directing the methods of coercion. A whole army of judicial officials, nay, every loyal and orthodox subject was put on the scent of heretics and conventicles. Heresy, nevertheless, spread its roots wide and deep among the people.

Singularly enough, at the very time that Henry fulminated this formidable edict against the subverters of the faith, he was immersed in a violent contest on political grounds with Pope Julius III. So little consistency is there in history, in which politics constantly clash with principle. Henry would not recognise the Council of Trent as a true œcumenical assembly, Pope and Council being far too amenable to imperial influence to interpret the decrees of Heaven impartially, or what came to the same thing, in the interest of the most Christian king. The Pope being refractory, should also suffer in his income obtained from France, not by the most honourable means, and used to the detriment of French interests in Italy. The edicts of June 1550 and September 1551 accordingly denounced the frauds committed, with papal connivance, by these reverend and right reverend persecutors of heretics and their creatures.[1] In his zeal against Pope and emperor, Henry even went the length of actively allying himself with Maurice of Saxony. Well might the heretics ask where was that unity of the Church which they were being burned for breaking? There was no greater illusion than this so-called unity, of which the most Christian king was the professed protector, with Europe, Catholic Europe too, all topsy-turvy, torn to the core with contention. Here is the Pope and his Council disowned by Henry and the Swiss, after the emperor has just left off cursing both under Julius' predecessor, Paul III. Not the Protestants merely, but the champions of Catholic unity themselves belie it by their actions, and turn it into the laughing-stock of Europe. Was there ever spectacle more ludicrous than that of a body of cardinals, bishops, and doctors solemnly met, in virtue of the sanction of a libertine Pope, to lay down the law of faith in the name of the universal Church, and yet being told from every quarter in turn that nobody recognises their authority? A strange unity this, and still stranger to torture and burn hundreds of men and women for venturing to deny it and think as conscience dictates. But it is necessary for the most Christian king to vindicate his orthodoxy from such presumptuous cavilling, and, therefore, while cursing the Council, defying the Pope, closing his kingdom against papal frauds, and allying himself with the heretic abroad, Henry protected his reputation by an access

[1] Isambert, xiii. 164-173, and 211-213.

of zeal in the burning of Protestants.[1] The war in defence of an empire largely Protestant, and in co-operation with Protestant allies, was, therefore, prefaced by a holocaust of heretics, and in spite of the distraction of a conflict, which virtually closed only with the Peace of Cateau Cambresis, each year is marked in the pages of the chronicler by its numerous sacrifices to the spirit of intolerance.

Beza has preserved the names and commemorated the heroism of many of these early sufferers for his faith. Paris, "the bloody and murderous city," as he calls it, enjoys a sinister reputation as the scene of many atrocities. They were not confined to Paris, however. All over the kingdom, at Bourges, Rouen, Toulouse, Bordeaux, Lyons, Dijon, Troyes, and elsewhere, the faggots were set ablazing. The narrative of their martyrdom varies little. It is the same tale in almost every case of spiritual exaltation, which will not hide itself under a bushel, and meets fate with a superhuman courage and patience. Some are caught selling or distributing "Lutheran" books on which the curse of the Sorbonne rests. The irrepressible zeal of others explodes against the vices of some ribald priest. Others strive to gain proselytes in clandestine meetings for prayer and exhortation. Here and there a schoolmaster is surprised, infecting his pupils with the Genevan poison. Others are intercepted returning from Geneva[2] or Lausanne to pursue their mission in their native places. Those arrested embrace all classes and ages—women as well as men. Merchants, students, lawyers, artisans, domestic servants equally with gentlemen by birth and office, contend for the honour of martyrdom. One or two characteristic examples must suffice. "At Lyons was caught this year (1551) and burned in the Square des Terreaux, the eve before All Saints, one named Claude Monier, from Issoire in Auvergne, formerly schoolmaster at Clermont, and thereafter labouring with much faithfulness in several places in Auvergne. Finally, having spent a year at Lausanne, where he had profited much, he came to Lyons to give instruction to a number of families. He assembled them in small troops to pray with, and impart to them what he had learned himself, until, after an excellent confession of faith, maintained to his last breath, he surrendered his soul to God."[3] "Greatly memorable," says our contemporary

[1] Histoire Ecclésiastique, i. 53, 54: "Pour ôter tout soupçon que le roi voulût favoriser ceux de la religion fut fait un édit depuis appelé l'édit du château Briant en date du 27 Juin," etc.

[2] The extraordinary influence of Calvin and the close intercourse of the French Protestants with Geneva is attested by the Venetian ambassador Michele, Relations, i. 415, 416.

[3] Hist. Eccles., i. 54.

annalist in another place, "is the year 1553 for the triumph of a great number of excellent martyrs, notably at Lyons. At which place arrived, on the last day of April 1552, five persons returning from their studies at the University of Lausanne, with the intention of going to Toulouse, Bordeaux, Saintonge, Limoges—each to his native place—to advance the work of the Lord. For to this work they had been set apart by the pastors and doctors of the church of Lausanne. They were all seized by the provost of the merchants, Poulet, the Lord crowning their ministry by martyrdom for the town of Lyons, and consequently for the whole kingdom of France, seeing that a large number of merchants resorted thither from every province. . . . And however much the adversaries of the truth, moved by extreme violence, strove to send them forthwith to the flames, God preserved them, and hindered, by various means, notably by the intervention of the Lords of Berne with the king for their deliverance, their immediate despatch, so that they remained in prison till the 16th May 1553. During this time their hands were not bound, nor their tongues tied, being freely visited, heard, and succoured in their prison by certain good people. Among whom ought not to be forgotten a certain merchant from St Gall in Switzerland, named Hans Liner, who spared neither his goods nor his person in their behalf. In brief, the prison in which these five persons were confined was thus converted by the great grace of God, under the very nose of His enemies, into so many pulpits, from which the word of God resounded through the whole town, and much further beyond. But though the rage of their enemies was kept in bridle for a time from on high, nevertheless the diligence of those who worked for their deliverance was not successful, the Lord having prepared the crown of martyrdom for them, which they suffered with marvellous constancy."[1] "The Parliament of Rouen," we read in another place, "had also its part in these persecutions in the person of a native of the town, named W. Néel, formerly of the Order of Augustines, who, going to Evreux in the month of February (1553), and passing through the hamlet of Nonnancourt, was made prisoner by a certain Le Gouse, Dean of Illiers, merely on suspicion. For he had reproved in a tavern certain drunken and blaspheming priests. His trial was therefore begun by the bishop, Simon Viger, doctor of the Sorbonne, and a man of some knowledge, but of very little conscience. Before him Néel made an excellent confession, even unto death, which he suffered by decree of Parliament, being gagged and cruelly burned at Evreux."[2]

[1] Hist. Eccles., i. 56, 57. [2] *Ibid.*, i. 59.

The burning of a heretic was a spectacle much enjoyed by the fanatic populace, especially at Paris, and the last moments of these intrepid confessors were sometimes outraged by the fierce and opprobrious shouts of the mob. Torture, too, sent many of them disfigured and maimed to the stake, for their savage judges were anxious to find out their accomplices. "At Paris," says Beza (date 1553), "a colporteur of books was treated in a very strange fashion. For after having tortured him so that his members were dislocated (despite which he would not reveal the names of the persons to whom he had sold books), they inserted a wooden gag into his mouth, which was stretched to such a degree that it bled at both sides, and his face was hideously disfigured. Then being led to execution amid the furious shouts of the people, eager to tear him in pieces, his naked body was hoisted in the air, so lavishly greased and powdered that the flames shot up from the straw before they had kindled the wood, and roasted the skin ere the poor body was burned within. Nevertheless, this faithful servant of God remained firm, showing his constancy with eyes upraised to heaven, until the cords that held the gag being consumed, he was enabled to invoke God with loud voice till his last sigh."[1] No army ever showed a discipline so devoted as did these recruits of the reforming crusade. Seldom does one flinch before death, and this, too, when death is both terrible and the climax of dishonour. The name heretic is a stigma from which society flees as it would the pestilence. To die on the battlefield is glory, to roast at the stake is to expiate the most detestable of crimes. Yet such was the spirit of exaltation in these men and women that they unflinchingly braved alike the torment and the opprobrium of such a fate with singing of psalms and mutual exhortation. Even the prayers of fathers and mothers were equally powerless with the imprecations of the mob to move them.[2] Devotion so intense is the best propagandist, and it was not without its effect even on hostile spectators. At Soissons, for instance, the executioner was melted to tears by the prayer of a martyr for the conversion of his persecutors, and became a Protestant.[3] The number converted by these dying testimonies and by the missionary spirit which emanated from Geneva and Lausanne are evidenced by the numerous congregations which sprang up all over France. Paris led the way in the effort to organise the forces of reform. In September 1555 a small congregation ventured to elect pastor, elders, and deacons.[4] Meaux, the fisher village of Isle

[1] Hist. Ecclés., i. 59.
[2] *Ibid.*, i. 62.
[3] *Ibid.*, i. 59.
[4] *Ibid.*, i. 63.

d'Arvert on the coast of Saintonge, Bourges, Issoudun, Aubigny, Blois, Angers, Tours, following the example of Paris, installed as pastor some zealous disciple of Calvin or Beza.[1] These quasi-public reunions naturally exposed their members to easier detection, and the pages of the annalist swell with the story of numerous heroic deaths. Yet the movement continued to grow, in spite of repressive edicts and drastic cruelties. The anxieties of war, not the clemency or lukewarmness of court or king, stood the Protestants in good stead. The judges, too, moved by pity or impressed by the high spirit of their prisoners,[2] were sometimes remiss in putting in operation the agencies of Terror. More decisive action must be taken if the Church were not to be submerged. Nothing short of the Inquisition, so effective in Spain and Italy, would stamp out the plague. So it appeared to Paul IV. and the Cardinal of Lorraine, who worked on the troubled conscience of the monarch by the insinuation that both his soul and his crown were in danger if seditious heresy were not rooted out. At Henry's request, therefore, the Pope, by a Bull dated the 26th April 1557, appointed as inquisitors for France Cardinals Lorraine, Bourbon, and Chatillon. Bourbon, "as full of hate against 'the religion,' as empty of all knowledge," was a bigot without force of character or intelligence, and the mere tool of Lorraine. The choice of Chatillon, brother of Admiral Coligny, and inclined to sympathise with the party of reform, was a strange one, and was a mere ruse on the part of Lorraine to inveigle him into an expression of disapproval of these inquisitorial methods, and ruin him and his brother. Precursory to beginning operations, he got a royal edict drawn up, which empowered the ecclesiastical judges to prosecute and punish heretics without intervention of the secular courts, and permitted the bishop or his vicar to assist the civil judges even in trials for heresy before the civil courts.[3] Against this edict the Parliament vigorously remonstrated. It would expose the subject to an ecclesiastical tyranny as well as greatly diminish the sovereignty of the Crown. It would deprive the prisoner of the protection of the law in matters affecting life and property in addition to religion. The king alone is sovereign, and to demit his sovereignty in favour of an inquisition was to deprive the subject of the right of appeal and expose him to an arbitrary tyranny. This remonstrance was ignored, and the edict was registered by royal command in the following January 1558.[4]

[1] Hist. Ecclés., i. 62-68. [2] *Ibid.*, i. 66, 70.
[3] Isambert, xiii. 494-497.
[4] See Hist. Ecclés., i. 87, 88, and Isambert, xiii. 494.

Meantime the disaster of St Quentin had stunned France as a divine judgment. Was not God wroth with a kingdom that had turned away from the true faith? So argued the zealots and the mob of Paris, and the zealots and the mob forthwith constituted themselves the avengers of an angry Heaven. On the evening of the 4th September, a few hundred Protestants met in a house in the Rue St Jacques, behind the Sorbonne, to celebrate the Lord's Supper. Some lynx-eyed students of the College of Plessis, on the alert for some time to discover the reason of these meetings, raised the alarm, sent for the watch, and meanwhile gathered a crowd before the house to stop the egress of those within. The mob tore down a wall in order to provide itself with missiles. Its shouts increased the concourse until the inhabitants of the whole quarter, armed with pikes and halberds, were converged around the house. Who are these men and women meeting together in secret? Lutherans, who sing psalms, and then put out the lights and give themselves up to prostitution. Robbers, too, brigands, conspirators against the kingdom, who are in league with the enemy to deliver up the city. For at this moment the army of the Duke of Savoy is expected to appear in sight of Paris, and every one's mind is full of the spectres of his apprehensions. Heap up the stones, therefore, ready for action, bar the street with carts to prevent escape. Stones and carts being massed in readiness, and the mob filling the air with its shouts and curses, the little congregation deliberate what is to be done. At last the men resolve to break through the scowling crowd outside at the point of the sword, and force a way for the old men, women, and children. This plan only half succeeded, however, for while the men, amid a shower of stones, split the crowd and clambered over the barricades, with the loss of only one killed, the women were unable to follow and remained within, awaiting the arrival of the guard and the king's procurator. The procurator, expecting to discover a band of desperate and debauched conspirators, was astonished to find a number of virtuous and well-connected women and children, whose distress and simplicity melted him to tears. What was the object of their assembly? Nothing more heinous than to hear the Word of God, to pray for the king, to sing psalms, and receive the sacrament. Certainly nothing to excite a whole quarter of Paris to arms and outrage. But were there not monks and nuns among them to make the story of the carnal abomination in which they indulged more feasible? "For these worthy monks and nuns," explains the annalist, "have acquired so good a reputation for sanctity, that if there is any story of whoring or infamy agoing, they must necessarily cut a figure in it,

even on the confession of those who favour them."[1] They must, therefore, to prison, on the ground at least of holding an illicit meeting, and to the Chatelet they were accordingly conducted, amid the curses and blows of the mob, their clothes being wrenched off their backs, the hats of the women knocked off, their hair torn, their faces covered with dirt and mud. The foul imputations of the popular imagination were even repeated from the pulpits, nay, amplified so as to add to the guilt of prostitution that of the murder of infants. Even the king was persuaded, in spite of indignant Protestant denials, of the truth of these silly and malignant inventions.[2] Several of the prisoners fell victims to these puerile accusations, and more would have followed had not the Swiss sent ambassadors to intercede in favour of clemency. In the conflict with Philip, Henry was too dependent on Swiss goodwill to ignore this intervention, and the proceedings against the others were stopped. Here is the story of the splendid heroism of those whom this intervention was too late to save. "Thus, then, on the 12th September" (1557), relates Beza, "these three martyrs (one a lady) were condemned, and after having suffered torture, were taken to the chapel, awaiting the happy hour of their death. There the doctors, according to their custom, came to torment them, but they were valiantly repelled, for they would not be moved from their constancy. They were taken from prison and placed each in a tumbrel, to be drawn to the place of execution. Clinet (pedagogue and ruling elder) continued crying to those who pressed him to recant, that he had said and maintained nothing but the truth of God. The lady (Madame de Graverm, a beautiful young widow of twenty-three), seeing a priest approach for the purpose of confessing her, exclaimed that she had confessed to God and was sure of receiving pardon, since God alone could grant absolution. She was solicited by some councillors of Parliament, who reminded her that God commanded all to bear His cross, to take a wooden cross in her hands. 'Gentlemen,' was the response, 'you give me indeed a cross to bear, having condemned me unjustly and sent me to death for the cause of our Lord Jesus Christ, who never heard of this cross which you mention.' Gravelle (the third victim, a barrister), whose face was radiant, declared that he was in no wise affected by his condemnation. One of his friends asked to what death he was condemned. 'I know that I am condemned to die,' was the answer, 'but I have

[1] Hist. Ecclés., i. 76.

[2] "Ce bruit etait non seulement entre le commun peuple, mais entre les plus grands, jusqu'au roi, auquel on tacha de le persuader par faux rapport" (Hist. Ecclés., i. 76).

not concerned myself as to what shall be the manner of my death, knowing that God will assist me in whatever torment I may have to endure.' . . . Informed that the court willed that they should have their tongues cut out, if they would not be converted, he objected that this was not in the sentence. But on being assured that it was contained in the *Retentium* of the court, he held it out to the executioner in order to be cut, saying, 'I beseech you, pray God for me.' The lady being likewise requested to put out her tongue, did so with alacrity, saying, 'Since I pity not my body, shall I pity my tongue? No, no.' All three, being thus arrayed, were carried away. Gravelle's constancy was shown by his upturned eyes. Clinet had also his eyes fixed on heaven, but seemed sadder than the others, being worn by age, wan, and thin. The lady's constancy was the most marvellous, for she was in no wise changed in visage, but showed a blooming face of remarkable beauty. Arrived thus intrepidly at the Place Maubert, the scene of their death, they were burned, Clinet and Gravelle alive, the lady after being strangled and having her feet and face roasted by the flames."[1]

This species of Christian charity was horrible enough. To roast, strangle, consume to ashes, a beautiful virtuous woman for a difference of theological opinion is too fiendish to need comment. Are these persecutors in the name of Christ cannibals and savages? No; they are still lower in the scale of humanity; they are grave men of the law and stately doctors of theology of three hundred and fifty years ago, who have been evolved out of these dark ages of degrading superstition which we have traversed and which still cast their dark shadow of intolerant priestly domination on this Place Maubert in September 1557. Surely if this is Christian civilisation, God and the devil must have changed places since Christ was on the earth.

The next sacrifice to the god of cruelty was, if possible, even more revolting. The victims were Nicolas le Cène, physician, and Pierre Gubart, solicitor. Condemned to torture and death, they were informed, like their predecessors, that if they would recant they should be strangled, if not, they should have their tongues cut out and be burned alive. "Resolved to suffer for Christ's sake, they willingly presented their tongues to the executioner. Gubart began to groan out his lamentation that he had no tongue wherewith to praise God. Cène comforted him with signs, and thus were they brought in tumbrels to the Faubourg St Germain, to the square of the pillory. The furious mob pursued them with every sort of curse and

[1] Hist. Eccles., i. 81, 82.

blasphemy, and would fain have put a hand to their execution. It was the cruellest death in the world by reason of the wind, which carried the flames at times from below them so that they were roasted in the air by slow stages and had their lower members burned to ashes before the upper were touched. In spite of their agony, they ceased not to show, with eyes upturned to heaven, infinite testimonies of their faith and constancy."[1]

An embassy from the German Protestant princes (March 1557) contributed powerfully to lengthen the provisional respite from persecution—political calculation, political ambition too, at a later time, as we shall see, being in France as elsewhere, a powerful indirect influence in favour of reform. Moreover, in France the doctrines of the Reformers had begun to gain powerful adherents among the higher classes. "The party of the religion, or 'the Lutherans,' as the Protestants were indiscriminately called, could already count such patrons as Antoine de Bourbon, King of Navarre, and his brother, the Prince of Condé. François de Coligny, Sieur d'Andelot, brother of the Admiral Gaspard de Coligny, was already a fearless partisan, while Jeanne d'Albret, Queen of Navarre, and Eleonore de Roye, Princess of Condé, were sympathetic friends, if not yet the ardent partisans of a later time. The King of Navarre and several noblemen and gentlemen attended the Protestant services at Paris. Navarre had the boldness to reclaim the liberty of a Protestant pastor, imprisoned in the Chatelet, on the pretext that he was a dependant of his house, and even joined the large public assemblies which met in the Pré aux Clercs—a place of public resort belonging to the University—to sing the Psalms of David. The Sieur d'Andelot carried his partisanship to the length of having the Gospel preached at many places during a tour in Brittany and along the Loire. Imagine the scandal of such conduct on the part of one whose reputation and influence were so great. D'Andelot was summoned to the royal presence to give an explanation of his heretic procedure. He defended himself so boldly against the remonstrances of the king and the Cardinal of Lorraine that he was arrested on withdrawing from the royal presence and incarcerated at Melun. The price of his liberty was his consent to hear a mass, but he refused formally to abjure his errors.[2] No wonder that the pulpits resounded with appeals to the fanaticism of the faithful. France was being overrun with the tares of heresy. New churches were springing up by the score in Orleans, Gascony, Rouergue, Dauphiné, and other provinces. Beza does not exaggerate the strength of the movement.

[1] Hist. Ecclés., i. 82, 83. [2] *Ibid.*, i. 89-92.

The testimony of the Venetian ambassador, Gio. Michele, is equally strong. Protestantism had affected three-fourths of the kingdom, and counted all classes, and some even of the higher as well as the lower clergy, in its ranks. Repression had only increased its adherents, and the number of those who were Protestants at heart, if not in profession, was enormous. Dislike of the papal authority which cost France annually so large a sum in payment of the papal Bulls, etc., had helped to swell both its open adherents and its secret friends.[1] In some places the whole population renounced the authority of the Church. Even doctors of the Sorbonne are found among the proselytes, and we read of the priest of a village near Orleans casting his certificate of license and his breviary into the fire in the presence of the Protestant congregation. So strong had its adherents become by 1559 that an assembly of representatives of all congregations throughout the kingdom met at Paris in May of that year to organise a general synod and adopt a confession of faith and a common discipline.[2]

The Parisian preachers thundered still more loudly, notably the monk, "brother Jean de Han, as ignorant as ignorance itself," who harangued at the Church of St Innocent. Since the magistrates were so relax in rooting out damnable error, let the people take the law into its own hands — massacre the Lutheran dogs on the spot. Brother Han's equally ignorant auditors took him at his word. Outside the church two men got entangled in a dispute over the sermon. For want of better argument one called the other a Lutheran. Whereupon the mob made a rush at him, pursued him into the church, and belaboured him soundly. A gentleman who was passing at the time with his brother, a prior, rushed forward to the rescue. Consequently he, too, must be a Lutheran, called out a priest who was assisting in the godly work, and forthwith the fists of the mob battered his skull. His brother, the prior, who rushed to his defence, received his share of the blows, and both were covered with blood in an instant. Ultimately the sacristan had the church cleared, and the *melée* was continued outside. Happily the gentleman escaped half-dead into the house of the vicar, but the poor prior was stabbed in the stomach and fell dead, his mad assailants finishing the murderous business by bathing their hands in his blood to earn the glory of having massacred a Lutheran![3] A similar scene took place at the Church of St Eustachius, where another of these savage zealots harangued the populace. A poor scholar in the congregation

[1] Relations, i. 411-417, and 440-443.

[2] Hist. Ecclés., i. 88-121.

[3] *Ibid.*, i. 105.

happening to laugh at the pranks of a companion, "Rascal of a Lutheran," cried out an old woman, "thus to mock at the preacher." The poor delinquent was forthwith seized, hurried outside, to succumb under the blows of these fanatics. In the course of the holy work, his eyes were gouged out of their sockets, and one brutal zealot rode his horse three times over his prostrate body.[1]

Instead of repressing and punishing such cruel lawlessness, the cardinal and the Constable were meditating a fresh crusade, now that the Peace of Cateau Cambresis had obviated the necessity of cultivating Swiss and German Protestant goodwill. That treaty was, in fact, in part at least, the outcome of the desire of both Philip and Henry and their mentors, the Cardinals Granvella and Lorraine, to unite their energies in extirpating heresy. Hence the stipulation to join hands in order to unite the Church by means of a General Council, and carry on the crusade against its subverters.[2] The anxiety to convoke a Council for the settlement of the Church might not be flattering to the Pope, seeing that the Pope had his own Council at Trent. Paul IV. is said to have died of vexation at this independent and meddlesome deliverance on the part of their Catholic and most Christian majesties. But whether it pleases the Pope or not, it is none the less patent that Philip and Henry are zealous for the faith, yea, are determined to suffer the pestilence of heresy no longer. Primarily, the Parliament, especially the Chambre de la Tournelle, should be compelled to take more aggressive action against the Lutherans. This chamber, or divisional court, whose presidents were the moderate Seguier and Du Harlay, had dealt as humanely as possible with the heretics, in contrast to the intolerant *Grande Chambre*, which, in the words of Beza, "was as a furnace ever vomiting forth fire."[3] The Reformed doctrines had, in fact, by this time a considerable number of adherents in the Parliament and among the nobility. Had not the Chamber of the Tournelle contented itself with punishing with mere banishment these heretics who stoutly

[1] Hist. Ecclés., i. 185, 106. The Chatelet seized some of the murderers, but the Grand Chamber of the Parliament acquitted them on appeal!

[2] The agreement as to religion occupies a prominent place in the treaty: "Les dits deux princes . . . procureront et s'emploieront de tout leur pouvoir à la convocation et celebration d'un saint concile, universel tant necessaire à la reformation et reduction de toute l'église Chretienne en une vraie union et concorde" (Isambert, xiii. 515-528). Cf. Histoire Ecclésiastique, i. 102, which adds that the monarchs came to an express understanding to destroy heresy: "La paix tres honteuse . . . entre les deux rois, avec expresse deliberation d'exterminer toutes les églises reformées."

[3] Hist. Ecclés., i. 163

denounced the idolatry of the mass in its presence? Hideous enormity, which shocked Paris even more than the news of a disastrous defeat would have done. This remissness must cease if justice was not to fall into contempt among the priest-ridden mob, and the court was to preserve its reputation for orthodox sanctity. A conference between the two chambers (La Mercuriale or General Assembly), was, therefore, held for the exchange of views on the difficulty. What was to be done with heresy and heretics? was the question. Some of these law councillors were of opinion that "a free and General Council" would alone bring peace and harmony to the Church, and that the king should be petitioned to this effect, capital punishment on the score of religion to cease meanwhile. Others held, with the President Seguier, that the punishment of Lutherans should be restricted to banishment. Still others, that if a man were to be condemned for heresy, it was necessary that the civil court should assure itself of the fact of his heresy before passing sentence, should in truth decide what was heresy and what not, at all events till a General Council should authoritatively lay down the law, the poor Pope being apparently left entirely out of the reckoning. Others insisted on the necessity of reformation, appealed to the Bible as the only authoritative arbiter, and boldly denounced purgatory, invocation of the saints, and other dogmas and practices contrary to Scripture. One member, Pierre Pithou (let his name be had in eternal honour) expressed his aversion of persecution in any form for religious opinion, by simply reading from Sulpicius Severus' life of St Martin a passage in which the Apostle of Gaul denounces the punishment of heresy by death, and refuses to have communion with the Spanish bishops who were guilty of this crime against Christian charity.[1] The majority of the Parliament was, it seemed, resolved to endorse the opinion of the Tournelle in favour of moderation at least, and only a few declared in favour of continuing "the customary severity."[2]

The Cardinal of Lorraine, who had not yet got a chance of launching his inquisitional bolt, was unspeakably shocked. The king should teach these councillors who truckle to heresy what it means to shock a cardinal. His majesty is in danger of nothing less than eternal damnation if swift justice cannot be had on those cursed sectaries and their abettors. So Diana, the Constable, the Presidents of the Grande Chambre, Minard and St André, anxious to undo their opponents of the Tournelle, Seguier and Harlay. There was an additional reason why Henry should dragoon the rebellious Parlia-

[1] For this incident see Martin, Histoire de France, viii. 496.

[2] Hist. Ecclés., i. 121.

ment. A holocaust of a half-dozen of these "Lutheran" councillors would be a most popular celebration of the double marriage arranged at Cateau Cambresis, and now on the eve of celebration (Philip to Henry's eldest daughter, Elizabeth, the Duke of Savoy to his sister, Margaret). It would be a rare compliment to Philip's representative, the Duke of Alva, and the Spanish grandees, as well as a pledge of good faith in the observation of treaties.[1] To the Convent of the Grands Augustins (temporarily occupied by the Parliament) Henry accordingly proceeded on the 10th of June, accompanied by the Cardinals of Lorraine and Guise, several princes of the blood, the Constable, the Chancellor Bertrand, cardinal, too, by this time, and a number of archbishops and other high dignitaries. Henry enlarged on his determination to conserve the faith, more especially as his hands were now freed from the burden of war, and had come to hear what his Parliament was doing to this end. He heard, indeed, more than he had bargained for. The chancellor bade the members proceed with the expression of their opinions on the religious question (not yet ended). "Religious dissension," said Du Faur, "is, indeed, a source of disorder, but who is the real author of these troubles? Beware lest what Elias of old said be applicable to this contingency, 'Art thou not he that troubleth Israel?'" Then came the turn of Anne du Bourg, whose evangelical fervour would not be restrained even by the royal presence. "It is no small matter to condemn those who in the midst of the flames invoke the name of Jesus Christ. Should such men be so punished when so many hideous crimes—adulteries, abominable debaucheries, perjuries—are committed every day with impunity? Is it sedition to seek to reform abuses, and to expose the vices of the Romish religion by the light of Scripture?" Most galling to the cardinal, but presently the first president came to the rescue in a vehement declamation, and held up the persecution of the Waldenses and the Albigenses as a noble example of zeal, worthy of emulation. Thereupon Henry, after taking counsel with the cardinal, gave vent to his wrath. Instead of having the votes counted for or against, he summarily quashed proceedings, ordered the Constable to arrest Du Bourg and Du Faur on the spot, and Count Montgomery, captain of his Scottish Guard, to conduct them to the Bastille, and declared the arrest of five other councillors not present. Three of these succeeded in making a timely escape, the other two followed Du Bourg and Du Faur to the Bastille. The Parliament thus crushed, letters patent were despatched throughout the kingdom

[1] So Vielleville, who introduces the cardinal as plying Henry with this argument (Mémoires, Petitot, xxvii. 402).

enjoining all judges under pain of severe punishment, to proceed against all heretics with exemplary severity.[1] The undulations of the royal bigotry were felt through all ranks of obsequious officialdom to the uttermost parts of the kingdom. The Protestants had to be more circumspect in their meetings now that the lynx eye of the cardinal was turned on their assemblies through the telescope of local authority. They only ventured furtively to meet in small numbers under the protection of darkness.[2]

Suddenly like a thunderclap the news of the king's death broke over France, and caused even the persecutor to hold his breath. The Lord's anointed, the chosen champion of the Church, smitten down in an instant by the splintered lance of a clumsy knight! Here was a fine riddle for our cardinal keeper of the will of Heaven to solve, and a most welcome opportunity for our Protestant champion to claim Providence for his side, which he invariably does in spite of mystery and logic. The oppressor struck down while stretching forth his bloody hand against the servants of the Lord! The text is too tempting not to improve the occasion, and while dismay is struck into the heart of the cardinal, Diana, and all the bigoted parasites of the late *régime*, fearful lest their power of misgoverning and spoiling the nation be gone, the Protestant assemblies resound with thanks to God (and no wonder) for the temporary remission of their sufferings. Henry's love of the tournament was responsible for an accident whose providential bearing was so variously interpreted. There was frequent jousting during the festivities in celebration of the double marriage of his daughter and his sister. On the 29th of June he challenged the Dukes of Nemours and Guise and the Count of Montgomery to break a lance with him. He appeared in magnificent armour, wearing the black and white colours of Diana, and acquitted himself right cavalierly. In the flush of victory he challenged Montgomery to a second course, in spite of the remonstrances of Queen Catherine and of Vielleville, the next on the list. Both again rushed to the shock, splintering their lances in right spirited fashion, when Montgomery, forgetting to lower the stump, dashed it in passing against the king's visor. The force of the blow raised the visor; the shaft pierced the brain, and the poor king sank on the neck of his horse, which continued its career to the farther end

[1] See Hist. Ecclés., i. 122, 123; De Thou, Historiarum sui Temporis, Libri cxxxviii., lib. xxii. 451-453; Vielleville, Mémoires, Petitot, xxvii. 401-407.

[2] "La persecution s'augmenta tellement que par toutes les eglises on n'assemblait plus que vingt ou trente à la fois et de nuit le plus secretement qu'on pouvait" (Hist. Ecclés., i. 129).

of the lists. He was carried into his chamber, and after lingering eleven days in great agony, died on the 10th July.[1] Tragic, indeed, such a fate, over which it is to be wished that our interpreters of the will of Heaven on both sides had been silent, mindful of their own sins and of the precept to judge not. But this is not the age of charitable judgments, and certainly Henry had done nothing to earn the forbearance of these Protestants. There was in truth not much of kinghood in him, the knightly spirit excepted. Weak, though valorous, he must be pronounced to have been, the instrument of selfish bigots, whose interest is the main thing. He could boast the capture of Calais and the Three Bishoprics; but he failed to reap the due fruits of victory, and suffered several terrible disasters. His internal administration was a complete failure, the repression of the Protestants, a mistake and a crime, viewed both from the practical point of the interest of France and that of religious and intellectual freedom. Along this fatal path Henry led the kingdom to the brink of civil and religious strife, in which for nearly forty years the strength of the nation was to be consumed, before the lesson of compulsory and partial toleration was learned.

I have lingered at some length on the struggle of Protestantism to secure a footing in France. I have done so in view of its prospective religious and political effects. Protestantism has been called "the preface to the Revolution."[2] It undoubtedly gave a tremendous impulse to political as well as religious discussion, whose influence was to be felt more or less potently throughout the next two and a half centuries of French history. In the immediate sequel of fifty years, this influence might be said to have been the controlling factor in that history. Unfortunately it cannot be said to have been altogether salutary. The first fervour of spirituality became alloyed with ambition and political partisanship, by no means always patriotic, ennobling, beneficial to France, and fraught with terrible consequences in bloodshed, hatred, barbarity. It is an awful drama of implacable fury and bloody violence that was enacted on the soil of France for forty years to come in the name of religion, Protestant as well as Catholic. It has its heroic parts, it is true, but on the whole it is dismal reading, and neither Catholic nor Protestant can lay claim to a monopoly of high motives or noble action. The worst passions were at work on both sides, the passions born of fanaticism, partisanship, ambition, while on both sides, happily, there were voices raised in favour of moderation and forbearance in the interest both

[1] Vielleville, Mémoires, Petitot, xxvii. 411-419.
Buet, François de Lorraine, 11.

of religion and patriotism. These voices were long drowned by the clamour of furious faction and murderous strife till at length they found their successful champion in Henry IV. For this long tragedy the policy of repression pursued by Francis and Henry, at the instigation of unenlightened bigots, is mainly responsible. The Protestant had no choice but to close with his antagonist, and they must bear the chief share of the blame, who left him no other alternative. It is a poor defence to denounce the demand for toleration as factiousness and anarchy, as Catholic apologists are wont to do. We cannot explain the fact of conscience by such superficial terms, and the repression of this kind of factiousness in favour of a traditional system of uniformity, which could no longer satisfy the demands of the awakened spiritual nature, could only aggravate it. If the Protestants were erelong guilty of factiousness in the political as well as the spiritual sense, and carried their partisanship to regrettable excesses, let us not forget that they had the memory of many cruel wrongs to excite to excess, and were forced by the intolerance of their opponents on the path of aggression and [redacted]. So far the Protestants had been suffering for existence, suffering, it may be said, almost without resistance, certainly without concerted opposition. Henceforth the movement takes on a different aspect. It becomes organised in its resistance, becomes aggressive, and this not with the weapons of patience, heroism, propagandism. It resists the sword with the sword; the congregation becomes a regiment; the assembly an army. It not only demands toleration, it is determined to enforce it. Well, its opponents had at least thrown down the gauntlet, and if it could not enforce toleration, it would never enjoy it. Unfortunately the political intriguer has his part in the movement, as he had, too, in the movement against it. Assuredly neither side could throw a stone at the other on this score. If men like Condé and many of the Protestant grandees were not disinterested, were the Guises and the zealots of the League all pure patriots? Unfortunately, too, the Protestants had not learned from the excesses of their opponents to practise toleration. Protestantism was not a movement in favour of toleration on broad human, or even religious principles. It had already at Geneva burned Servetus, the apostle of rationalism, of the right to doubt, inquire, formulate independent theological views. It had prosecuted one of its adherents, Sebastian Castellion, the enemy of violent methods in the propagation of religious dogma, the author of a book "De Non Comburendis Hereticis,"[1] which Beza

[1] Written at Basle, and published at Magdeburg in 1554 under the pseudonym of Martinus Bellius.

denounced and attempted to confute with all the fury of a doctor of the Sorbonne. In the same History in which the Protestant historian glorifies the martyrs of his own creed, he laments the laxity which allowed William Postel of Normandy, "one of the strangest monsters which have appeared for several centuries," to escape the punishment of his unorthodox reveries, Postel being an eclectic in religion, the prophet of a sect of Deists, whose "horrible blasphemies" shock the rigid champions of Protestantism. Significant, too, is the omission of that incident in the royal session of the Parliament of Paris, when Pierre Pithou read the passage from Sulpicius Severus in condemnation of death to heretics. It was a sad legacy of narrow dogmatism that the bigoted obscurantism of ages had bequeathed to modern Europe, and Protestantism had not learned from experience the inhumanity and the iniquity of intolerant ignorance and presumption. In this matter Protestantism was most illogical; it failed to draw the right conclusion from its own premises. Catholicism was certainly logical; only it drew its conclusion from false premises.

Thus far, however, the heroism of the French Protestants is a most honourable fact. In the midst of widespread moral declension and the corruption of its rulers, it is something new to find a people capable of so soaring a flight into the world of the ideal, the spiritual, the eternal. All honour to these heroes of the stake and the dungeon. In France, as in other lands, in this age of religious brutality, the elect of humanity are there—not many of them decked with a coronet, most of them nature's nobility, simple enthusiasts for truth,—there, to stand the test of fire, gold purified by the flames, gold of humanity.

SOURCES OF THIS CHAPTER.—Isambert, Recueil, xiii.; sources as in the preceding chapter, Mémoires de Monluc, Tavannes, etc.; Histoire Particulière de la Cour de Henri II. in Archives Curieuses, iii.; Mémoires de Vielleville in Petitot, xxvi.; Relations des Ambassadeurs Venetiens; La Boëtie, Discours sur la Servitude Volontaire (Bibliothèque Nationale); Montaigne's Essays and the Life by M. de Stapfer in the Grands Écrivains Français; Nisard's Histoire de la Littérature Française, i.; Mémoire de Salignac in Petitot, xxxii.; Mémoire du Voyage de M. le Duc de Guise en Italie, par C. de Chastre, in Petitot, xxxii.; Histoire Ecclésiastique des Églises Reformées, erroneously attributed to Theod. Béza; Martin, Histoire de France, viii.; De Thou, Hist. sui Temporis.

## CHAPTER VII.

### The Last of the Valois—Religious Wars and Political Anarchy (1559-1589).

WHAT France needed at the death of Henry II. was a wise and strong king, a ruler able to command and enforce a truce between Catholic and Protestant, to check Catholic bigotry, to moderate Protestant zeal, to inaugurate at least a modified toleration. Instead of this strong king there came a series of three weak rulers, Henry's sons, Francis II., Charles IX., and Henry III., through whom the queen-mother, Catherine de Medici, mainly governed. As a foreigner Catherine's authority was regarded with jealousy and ill-will, and though she possessed great ability, she had not the force of character, the moral strength, to render it effective. She was an Italian and a votary of Italian statecraft, and her statecraft was in the long run to produce the evil fruits of perfidy and unscrupulousness. She indeed showed for a time great sagacity in her efforts to moderate religious and forestall civil strife, and had these efforts succeeded she would have earned a very different reputation from that which has become, not always justly, the verdict of history. She allowed herself to be guided by the wise counsels of L'Hôpital, the advocate of moderation and toleration, and but for political complications, for which both religious parties are not free from their share of blame, L'Hôpital might have succeeded in his policy of religious compromise and political reform. Unfortunately for France, both religious parties became political parties, or rather both became the pretext for personal ambitions, for a princely and aristocratic reaction against the Crown, while both were at the same time the nurses of religious fanaticism. Between these parties stood L'Hôpital, and at first Catherine, and the small band of moderate men who were patriots as well as Catholics or Protestants, and strove to pursue patriotic ends. With a strong and sagacious king on the throne, L'Hôpital might have succeeded. Without firmness, wisdom, persistence, moral strength on the throne,

his plans were doomed to failure. Catherine was erelong to fail him, and in consequence anarchy and bigotry submerged France beneath the horrors of civil and religious war, as well as dishonoured the weakly *régime* of the last of the Valois.

With the advent of Francis II., in July 1559, the Duke of Guise and the Cardinal of Lorraine, whom Catherine was forced for the time being to cultivate, obtained the supreme direction of affairs. They were both of them remarkable men, who have been the objects alike of exaggerated praise and bitter detraction. The cardinal was at this time thirty-six years of age, handsome, very intellectual, possessed of an astonishing memory and a rare eloquence, highly cultured, a linguist as well as an erudite theologian, and distinguished from the conventional French prelate by his outwardly correct manners and his prodigious industry. His faults were duplicity, cupidity, vindictiveness, to which his Protestant assailants add hypocrisy, flagrant immorality, corruption, and other crimes![1] Whatever his personal virtues or shortcomings, his influence had, as we have seen, not been salutary in internal policy or administration, and he had not, like his brother, the duke, who possessed pre-eminently the qualities of the great soldier, had the advantage of redeeming his faults in the eyes of the people by the brilliant achievements of the battlefield. Both were bitter enemies of the new doctrines, and both were greedy of place and power, and they now took advantage of their position as uncles of the young queen, Mary of Scots, to absorb place and power against all rivals. Diana was compelled to give up the royal jewels, and driven from the court. Montmorency, too, was fain to betake himself to his ancestral domains, and [illegible] the enemies of their hated *régime*, while the Bourbons, the weakly King of Navarre, who should have wielded the government, and his more spirited brother, the Prince of Condé, were treated with studied neglect,[2] and the Admiral Coligny was deprived of his government of Picardy. The Guises and their adherents held all the influential posts and ruled the State.[3]

The dismissal of Diana and the Constable was certainly no loss to France, but the augmentation of the power of the Guises was at

[1] For the character of the cardinal, see Relations, i. 438-441—a Catholic judgment, and the Epitre au Tigre de la France, edited by M. Ch. Read—a violent Protestant onslaught, whose author was the celebrated François Hotman.

[2] Mémoires de Tavannes, Petitot, xxiv. 256-258; see Histoire des Princes de Condé, par M. le Duc d'Aumale, i. 62-66, and cf. History of the Rise of the Huguenots, by Henry M. Baird, i. 346-358.

[3] See, for instance, Négociations, Lettres, et Pieces Diverses relatives au Regne de François II., edited for the Documents Inédits, by L. Paris, 310, 311.

the same time no gain. Corruption flourished as before, in spite of pains and penalties,[1] and the persecuting zeal of the cardinal was none the less ardent on this account. Repressive edicts were rained on the Protestants, edicts which denounced death against every one attending a Protestant assembly, and instituted arbitrary commissions to pursue heretics.[2] One of the victims of these special commissions was Anne du Bourg, the intrepid champion of Protestantism in the Parliament. Others succumbed to the violence of the fanatical populace. It seemed as if there was no law in France but the will of the cardinal and the mob. The discovery of a conspiracy to deliver the king and the country from the Guise tyranny, concocted by La Renaudie, with the knowledge of Condé,[3] accentuated the necessity of caution, and the edict of March 1560,[4] offered an amnesty for the past to all who would conform for the future. The scare over, a new edict, that of Romorantin,[5] restored the *régime* of coercion and limited trials for heresy to the ecclesiastical courts. The reply of the Protestants was to present petitions for toleration by the hand of Coligny to an assembly of the Notables at Fontainebleau. Coligny supported them in a noble speech, and joined in the demand of Marillac, Archbishop of Vienne, for the convocation of the States General. The duke and the cardinal reprobated the toleration of heretics, but were forced to profess their willingness to submit their administration to the review of the States-General, in the hope that they would support their policy of repression. For the rest the meeting of the Estates might serve, as it had occasionally done in times of crisis, as a safety-valve for the excitement of the time, and after the semblance of consulting the nation, the cardinal and the duke would find ways and means to ignore their oratory and their resolutions, and play the masters as before. The Huguenots, as the Protestants now began to be called, were, however, sanguine of great things, in spite of the insincerity of the Guises and the arrest and condemnation of Condé, who came to Orleans for the meeting, by a special commission.[6] An unlooked for event, which once more set the Huguenot preachers and writers musing on the mercies of a special Providence, still further raised their hopes, and upset the calculations of their oppressors. The death of Francis on the 5th December 1560 sud-

[1] See Isambert, xiv. 8, 30.

[2] *Ibid.*, xiv. 11, and cf. 7, 21; Tavannes' Mémoires, Petitot, xxiv. 260, 261.

[3] Aumale, Histoire des Princes de Condé, i. 71.

[4] Isambert, xiv. 22-24.

[5] *Ibid.*, xiv. 31-33 (May 1560).

[6] *Ibid.*, xiv. 52, 53; Tavannes, Petitot, xxiv. 283-292; Histoire des Princes de Condé, i. 76-94; Baird, Rise of the Huguenots, i. 415-444.

denly deprived the duke and the cardinal of the reins of power, and passed them over to Catherine de Medici and their opponents, the Bourbons.

While the nation was afflicted by the death of Henry II. (so we are assured by Gio. Michele), it regarded that of his eldest son as a deliverance, and but for the pity which so premature an end excited, it was glad to be rid of poor Francis. Not only was he mentally weak and apathetic; he had earned for himself a share in the odium of the *régime* of his wife's uncles,[1] who now became the malcontents in opposition to the government, and who had not the philosophy to practise in adversity the self-denial which they had demanded of the opponents of their own *régime*. Power being to their ambitious minds as breath to their lungs, they became the focus of intrigue and sedition against the government of Charles IX., or rather of his mother, Catherine. Of Charles, who was only eleven years old, great hopes were entertained. He was altogether, according to the Venetian ambassador, who retails the general opinion, an admirable boy, handsome of figure, with specially beautiful eyes, like his father, easy and graceful in deportment. A lad of talent, too, and very affable; but not robust, being easily fatigued, and only applying himself to his books in obedience to his mother, though fond of painting and sculpture. His passion was war and stories of war, and his governor only spoke to him of expeditions and conquests.[2]

Charles being a minor, the work of government devolved on Catherine, virtual, if not official, regent, assisted by a council,[3] with the King of Navarre, Coligny, and L'Hôpital, to keep in check the cardinal and the duke, who were little more than nominal members. Catherine was forty-three years of age, and is described by the observant Venetian as a woman of rare intelligence, apt in business of State, like all her family, and full of address. Which
is endorsed by the fact that in spite of her foreign origin a
which dogged her, she succeeded in attributing to herself
of virtual regent, and as such, exercised all the powers of
nominated to offices and benefices, conferred favours, ke
seal. She gave her opinions last in council, opened t
ambassadors, kept the king under the strictest surveillan
none beside herself to sleep in his chamber. Though Ta
her timid, Michele considers her courage as great as her

[1] Gio. Michele in Relations, i. 418.

[2] *Ibid.*, i. 418-420. The judgments of Suriano and Barbaro agr
Michele, i. 544, and ii. 42.

[3] Isambert, xiv. 58-60.

is, he judges, very deep, and her designs are difficult to penetrate—a veritable mistress of the art of dissimulation. She is not over regular in her manner of life, eats much, and, in spite of her stoutness, loves violent exercise, and courses with the king after the deer into the shaggiest thicket. Finally, prodigal of money and consequently deeply in debt.[1]

To maintain her position against the Guises, and at the same time remain mistress of the situation, Catherine turned to the King of Navarre, the first prince of the blood, who became Lieutenant-General of the kingdom in place of Duke Francis, and whom she could mould as she pleased. Her general policy was the best possible in the circumstances, viz., to manage parties by balancing them against each other,[2] a policy which her freedom from bigotry made natural to her. In this policy she was supported from conviction by L'Hôpital, who had succeeded Olivier as chancellor in the preceding June,[3] and who placed toleration and good government above party. It was the only remedy for faction and fanaticism, but it was a remedy very difficult to apply successfully, and, in judging Catherine and her actions, this difficulty should not be overlooked. To attempt to stand between two parties deadly hostile to each other, and moderate their implacable hate, to maintain order on the top of a volcano, to conciliate the irreconcilable, was a task that probably not one of her hostile critics could have performed. "I do not know a single man," remarks Correro, "whatever his prudence, who would not have been overwhelmed by all these obstacles. How much more a woman, who was a foreigner, without friends, overpowered by the general terror, and never hearing the truth spoken in her presence. I have always pitied rather than blamed her."[4]

The spirit of the States-General, which met at Orleans on the [illegible]ber 1560,[5] was found to be substantially in accord with [illegible]. In his opening speech, L'Hôpital struck the keynote of [illegible]on of at least two-thirds of the assembly—the nobility and [illegible]state. "You say that your religion is better, while I defend [illegible]ch is the more reasonable, that I follow your opinion or [illegible]. Or who shall judge of the matter, if not a holy Council? [illegible]beware of strife and sedition. The king and the queen [illegible]utmost to bring about peace by means of a Council.

[illegible], i. 424-429; cf. Suriano, *ibid.*, i. 548-555, and Correro, [illegible]o, as Italians, are inclined to judge her favourably. [illegible]e tenoit toute en balance" (Tavannes, Mémoires, Petitot, xxiv. 316). [illegible] xiv. 53.

[4] Relations, ii. 156. [5] Isambert, xiv. 56.

Violence against the heretic is the worst possible means to recall him from his error. Moreover, it is an offence against Christian charity. The persecutor shows that he hates men rather than their vices. Mildness will effect more than rigour. Discard these diabolic words, Lutherans, Huguenots, Papists—names of party, faction, sedition. Let us not change the name of Christian." This might not be a declaration of toleration, but it was on the way to it, and marks a large advance towards a saner view of religious disputes. The orator of the clergy would, however, have none of it, and gave voice to the intolerance of his order, by the emphatic demand for coercion. To this demand his fellow-deputies of the nobility and the Third Estate turned a deaf ear. "The duty of the priest," said De Rochefort, "is to pray and preach, and not to foment strife. Let the clergy reform themselves."[1]

Apart from the question of toleration, the Estates were bent on extorting a very large measure of reform of abuses, in spite of the fact that nobility and clergy did not overlook their own interests. They insisted on their convocation every four years at least, free election to ecclesiastical offices, the application of a portion of the Church property to the foundation of new chairs in the universities, the establishment of a college in each town, the reduction of the number of ecclesiastical holidays, the revision and codification of the laws, the election of judges, the restriction of feudal jurisdictions and their suppression in case of abuse, the suppression of the sale of offices and of internal customs, etc. Nor were their demands left to moulder in the archives of the chancellor's office, as had been the fate of so many of these bulky *cahiers* in former days. They were embodied, with some modifications, by L'Hôpital in the celebrated Ordinance of Orleans,[2] which remained a monument of his legislative wisdom, if it did not unfortunately obtain a chance of effective application in the stormy sequel of the near future. In regard to the question of a subsidy, the Estates declared that they had no power to grant additional taxes without the consent of their constituents. Prorogued for this purpose, the twenty-six deputies of the thirteen governments of the kingdom (thirteen for the nobles, thirteen for the Third Estate) convened at Pointoise in the following August in an almost revolutionary mood. They revived the old claim of 1484 to a share of the sovereign power on behalf of the Estates, and not only declared the patrimony of the Church national property, but pro-

[1] Isambert, xiv. 56-61.

[2] *Ibid.*, xiv. 63-98, and see also Thierry, Essai sur l'Histoire des Tiers État, 100-107.

posed to sell it for the public benefit (the clergy being indemnified), particularly for the liquidation of the public debt of forty-three millions of francs, and even demanded toleration for the Protestants, and the convocation of a Council to settle religious questions in accordance with Scripture alone. To judge from the enlightened tone of their demands, one is inclined to conclude that in virtue of the influence of the Renascence on the educated classes, France might at this period have anticipated the days of parliamentary government. One is, at all events, inclined to regret that the solution of the problem of how to stem the rising tide of civil and religious strife was not left to men who were disposed to bring reason and not partisan feeling to bear on it. Unhappily for France, reason and patriotism are confronted by the dark and wild sea of faction, prejudice, and passion, which will sweep them, and with them the nation, for long years to come into the abyss of murderous strife. The Estates are once more but the apparition of lofty aspirations, which only succeed in showing what might have been, if reason and patriotism could have transformed their aspirations into facts.

Meanwhile, the government had been vacillating somewhat in its attitude towards the Huguenots according as it sought to brave, or receded before, Catholic fanaticism. In January 1561 it ordered the Parliament of Paris to cease all prosecutions for religion except against those who assembled in arms.[1] A similar letter was addressed to all the judges in April.[2] The opposition of the Parliament and the bigoted party led by the Triumvirate, as the union of Montmorency, Guise, and St André, in opposition to toleration, was called, led in July to a rebound in favour of persecution in the shape of a "provisional" edict,[3] which, while enjoining peace between the two parties, and mitigating the punishment of heresy to banishment, forbade all conventicles, armed or unarmed, and submitted anew the cognisance of heresy to the ecclesiastical judges. In August came a futile attempt at compromise at Poissy, where Catholic and Protestant theologians, led by Beza, debated their respective tenets without getting any nearer to a feasible agreement. Though the colloquy disappointed the irenical hopes of the government, it rescued it from its financial embarrassments by agreeing to redeem the royal domain for a sum of sixteen millions of francs.[4] In return the government

[1] Isambert, xiv. 62.

[2] See Baird, Rise of the Huguenots, i. 476, 477.

[3] Isambert, xiv. 109-111.

[4] *Ibid.*, xiv. 111, 112. The transaction was known as the *Contrat de Poissy*.

gratified the clergy by an edict of restitution which directed the Huguenots to give up all churches in their possession on pain of death.[1] This measure did not portend serious mischief to the Huguenots, however. It was merely a sop in return for the sixteen millions. Catherine was in reality drawing nearer to Condé and Coligny[2] in opposition to the Triumvirate, who were busy bribing the feeble King of Navarre with offers of the kingdom of Sardinia and other flimsy prospects to desert her and turn Catholic. Religious riots, too, emphasised the futility of the halting policy of the last six months, and in these circumstances the influence of L'Hôpital secured a great triumph for that of reason as well as expediency. At his instigation an assembly of the Notables was convened at St Germain in January 1562, to hear a harangue from the chancellor in favour of toleration and to declare by a majority in favour of the abolition of all persecuting edicts. In virtue of this warrant, Catherine promulgated the memorable Edict of St Germain, which, though repeating the injunction as to the restitution of churches, and binding the Protestants to respect the ceremonies of the established Church, permitted the Protestant worship outside the cities, threatened severe punishment against all who should molest such assemblies, and forbade all recrimination or commotion on the score of religion.[3] Though the measure was only provisional (till the meeting of a General Council), its sanction by a representative assembly augmented its importance. The Protestants could now appeal to the protection of the law, and persecution, except in a very limited degree, was henceforth illegal. It was a great step in advance, if only bigotry could be brought to yield to reason and patriotism, and agree to tolerate what even the fiercest fanaticism could hardly ever hope to extirpate. Unfortunately it is the bane of bigotry that self-denial in matters of religious opinion is sacrilege. Instead of calming, the edict only redoubled the madness of theological strife.

There was a storm of protests from the pulpits and the parliaments. A more sinister answer was not long in coming. On Sunday, the 1st March 1562, an inoffensive Huguenot congregation was surprised by Guise's soldiers, and massacred with revolting brutality in the duke's presence. For this atrocity, the duke dis-

[1] Isambert, xiv., 122, 123 (October 1561), and see Baird, i. 543, 544.

[2] Tavannes, Petitot, xxiv. 317, 318; and see Le XVIe. Siècle et les Valois d'après les Documents Inédits du British Museum et du Record Office, par M. le Comte de la Ferrière, p. 54 *et seq.* This book forms a most important contribution to the diplomatic history of the time.

[3] Isambert, xiv. 124-129 (17th January 1562).

claimed responsibility, not very convincingly.[1] It was probably unpremeditated, but it was done by his men and in his presence, and if he had cared to save those murdered men, women, and children, he had but to speak the word. It was a fatal as well as a brutal outrage, for it was a challenge to fight thrown by the Catholics to the Protestants. It left them no alternative but to stand on their defence. It was a grim declaration that the policy of toleration would not be allowed a chance of success, if the bigots could help it. Rather civil war and universal fratricide than submission to the dictates of both humanity and true religion. After the arrival of Guise at Paris, Catherine retired with the king to Melun and Fontainebleau. Though favourable to toleration, she was impotent to enforce it, and the weakness and vacillation of the government at this critical juncture left the Protestants no alternative but to defend themselves. It was only with the greatest reluctance that Coligny could bring himself to champion the Huguenot cause with the sword. Condé was less irresolute, and the admiral at last yielded to a sense of duty and joined his chief at Meaux. It is impossible to see unalloyed zeal for religion in Condé's motives, though he was by this time a confirmed Protestant, in contrast to the King of Navarre, who finally returned to the old faith.[2] His private life was hardly that of a stern Huguenot, and his opposition to Guise, whom he regarded as a rival and as the usurper of his due place in the State, doubtless added its motive power to his resolution to draw the sword. With Coligny, on the other hand, the higher motive of fighting for his faith and that of his co-religionists turned the scale in favour of resistance,[3] but as in the case of most men who have played a principal part in an age of contention, his action and his character have been the target for the poisoned shafts of calumny. In the opinion of a recent French Catholic writer, not conspicuous for the judicial tone of his judgments, he was "a traitor to his God, his faith, his king, and his country." This is at least comprehensive, most admirably precise and certain. Pity only that this kind of precision and certainty does not usually accord with truth. Wherever we may seek the truth of French history, we shall look in vain

[1] Isambert, xiv. 131.

[2] Tavannes, Petitot, xxiv. 324, 325. Monluc did not believe in the disinterested religious zeal of the Protestant leaders: "Les grands n'ont pas de coustume de se faire brusler pour la parole de Dieu" (Commentaires, iii. 140).

[3] Tavannes, *ibid.*, 324, attributes the motive of ambition to Coligny equally with Condé. Coligny's character stands, however, much higher than that of Condé.

for it in French partisan writers. It is of course the judgment of a through-thick-and-thin Catholic who reads his own bias into history, and writes on the assumption that while Catholics have a right to vindicate their opinions, Protestants have no right to vindicate theirs against Pope or Sorbonne and their persecuting adherents. Coligny was false neither to his God nor to his king, for the religious conviction of the man is evident to every fair mind, and his allegiance to the king is a religious duty. That, moreover, the Huguenots were justified in resisting oppression and murder, is too self-evident to need demonstration. They had already suffered many wrongs in the long outrage of conscience and personal liberty, and in addition to the natural desire to reassure themselves against their repetition, they had no alternative but to surrender conscience and liberty or fight for them. No spirited person would have hesitated which part to choose, in spite of the assumption of a triumvirate of bigots and their adherents, that in religion tradition and majority are supreme. The declaration which Condé issued from Orleans, after Guise had secured the persons of the king and his mother, and removed them from Fontainebleau to Paris, and which denounced the illegal and coercive tactics of their enemies, will convince most reasonable persons that the Huguenots were not necessarily rebels, and that they had undoubtedly the better cause to fight for. The Venetian ambassador, who is inclined to judge in a matter of fact way, and to overlook entirely the question of human rights and moral force, was of opinion that it was all an affair of a section of intriguing grandees. To stamp out heresy you have but to decapitate half-a-dozen of the Huguenot leaders. The common herd would then be driven to mass like a flock of sheep.[1] He at least recognises the fervour of the rank and file, and in so doing unwittingly upsets his own judgment. "The term Huguenot embraces three different classes, the nobles, the bourgeoisie, and the common people. The nobles have joined the sectaries from the desire to supplant their enemies; the bourgeoisie, because they are allured by the sweets of liberty and the hope of enriching themselves out of the property of the Church; the people, because they are carried away by false opinions. Thus we may say that the factor in the case of the first is ambition, of the second cupidity, of the third ignorance. The nobles, using religion as a means to an end, may boast of having largely attained their aims, for the names of the admiral and the Prince of Condé are not less feared or loved than those of the king and the queen. The bourgeoisie advance every

[1] Correro in Relations, ii. 116.

day in the accomplishment of their designs, and the people hope by the new religion to conquer heaven."[1] Correro, like a good Catholic, forgets to inform us that if these elements of motive might more or less be predicated of the Huguenot side, though by no means indiscriminately, they might also be applied to a certain extent in explanation of the action of their opponents. If there were mixed motives on the one side, were there none on the other? Were the members of the Triumvirate saints and disinterested patriots of the purest water?[2] Have partisan writers forgotten the revelation of court immorality and official corruption under the *régime* of Diana, the Constable, the Guises, St André, and the rest of them, in which Condé and the admiral had no part? Partisan writers have apparently short memories, and their zeal for orthodoxy has not always kept good company. If it had not been a question of who was to govern France, means would probably have been found to restrain the fanaticism which on the Catholic side, and to some extent on the Huguenot side also, was a rich mine for designing hypocrites to dig in.[3]

A fratricidal war ensued, the first of many during the next thirty-six years. Formally, the Triumvirate posed in the more correct attitude. Were they not defending the king and his mother from a rebellious faction? Were they not the champions of the creed of the large majority against a handful of sectaries? True, but had they not taken possession of the king and the queen, and forced them to join them in spite of their tears and remonstrances? They virtually usurped the supreme power from very questionable motives, and practically it was a war of faction against faction, which the Crown was powerless to control. Against such a faction the Huguenots might well infer that they were amply justified in drawing the sword to free the king from compulsion as well as defend their lives from threatened murder. But had not the king declared that he was acting of his own free will?[4] The declaration, it was retorted, was merely the subterfuge of Guise and the Constable. Were not, then, the Huguenots traitorously intriguing with foreign sovereigns—the Protestant Queen of England and the German Protestant

[1] Relations, ii. 113-115.

[2] For the manœuvres of Guise to attain supreme power under the cloak of apparent disinterestedness, see Tavannes, Petitot, xxiv. 325.

[3] Tavannes (*ibid.*, 318-333) gives a very calm and able account of these events: D'Aumale mentions "the honourable scruples" of Coligny in prospect of a civil war (Hist. des Princes de Condé, i. 124).

[4] Isambert, xiv. 131.

princes—and opening the kingdom to the alien? Doubtless, but was not the Triumvirate similarly negotiating with Philip II., who had his own interests as well as those of religion to serve by intervention? These intrigues might be unpatriotic and highly injurious, but neither party could throw a stone at the other on this score. Both laid themselves open to censure, both were adepts in righteous recrimination.

The strength of the Huguenot movement appears in the number of large towns which took arms for the Protestant cause. Besides Orleans, they were in possession of Havre, Rouen, Caen, Le Mans, Blois, Tours, Poitiers, Bourges, Lyons. Condé was soon at the head of a moderate, but well-disciplined and enthusiastic army. Catherine tried hard to negotiate a compromise, but in the absence of independent and forcible action, war alone could decide between the two parties. It was a strange method of deciding the respective merits of theological dogmas, and certainly religious animosity did not tend to make war less terrible. Both religion and humanity were outraged by atrocities which form an awful travesty of the spirit of Christ. It was a war of savages, not of Christians, and if the murderous violence of the Catholics at Vassy, Paris, Sens, and Orange, provoked this savagery, the Huguenots were, unfortunately, not slow to imitate it. The most ruthless of the agents of this savage cruelty were Blaise de Monluc on the Catholic side, and the Baron des Adrets on that of the Huguenots. The maxim of both was that inhuman cruelty was the shortest and surest road to success. Adrets was a ruffianly soldier with no religious convictions, and by-and-by gravitated to the opposite side. Monluc was a marshal of France, and justified his infamous deeds with the plea of devotion to the king and hatred of revolt. In his eyes the Huguenot was a rebel and a traitor, for whom no death was horrible enough, and it is the rebel rather than the Huguenot on whom he made war. He is the type of the exaggerated cult of royalty on the part of the modern military man, and he is not a type to be proud of. His aim, he tells us in excuse, was to effect a speedy termination of an internecine strife, which gave vent to the worst passions. The soldiers, who were never paid, lived by plunder, made a business of pillage, and wished the continuation, not the cessation, of the war.[1] The only alternative for the marshal was, therefore, to hasten its end by rigour in the shape of wholesale massacre.[2] The rage of the mob

[1] Commentaires, ii. 425: "Il fault venir à la rigeur et à la cruauté, autrement la friandise du gain est telle qu'on desire plustot la continuation de la guerre que la fin."

[2] See, for instance, *ibid.*, ii. 447, 458, and iii. 23.

was responsible for excesses equally revolting. At Toulouse, for instance, three thousand persons, mostly Huguenots, were sacrificed to its fury. In this bloody work the Catholics had the best of it. Poitiers, Bourges, Rouen were wrested from the grasp of their opponents before Condé was able to take the field, only to be defeated and taken prisoner in the desperate battle of Dreux (19th December 1562). Coligny retired to Orleans, taking the Constable a prisoner with him, and whilst his brother, D'Andelot, defended the citadel of Protestantism against Guise, he marched into Normandy to co-operate with the English, whom he allowed to take possession of Havre,[1] as a guarantee for the restoration of Calais. The outlook looked dark enough for the Protestant cause in spite of this timely diversion in its favour. It was saved from destruction by the assassination of Guise at Orleans on the 18th February 1563. Catholic suspicion pointed to Coligny as the instigator of Jean Poltrot, and the confession of the murderer, extracted by torture, though subsequently retracted, passed the implication into history. The prevarication of the assassin, in addition to the admiral's reputation, is sufficient to exculpate him from connivance in so base a crime, though both the leader and his followers were none too sorry for the deed. The crime, however detestable, at least paved the way for negotiations, which Catherine was only too eager to begin. She arranged a conference between the Constable and Condé, the one a prisoner in Orleans, the other in the Catholic camp. The result was the Peace of Amboise, based on the Edict of St Germain. The edict of March 1563 was, however, less generous than that of January 1562. It permitted the Protestant nobles to hold services in their houses for themselves and their retainers, conceded the right of assembling for Protestant worship in all cities in which such assemblies had been held before the 7th March 1563, with the exception of Paris, and the same privilege in the case of one town in each bailiwick. It further confirmed the Protestant magnates in their offices and estates, and guaranteed complete amnesty for the past. Finally, it enjoined both sides to live in peace and cease recrimination.[2] Coligny and the Protestant parties were far from satisfied.[3] Its effect, they complained, would be to close a large number of Protestant places of worship, which the

[1] For negotiations of the Protestant leaders with Elizabeth see La Ferrière, Le XVIe. Siècle et les Valois, 66 *et seq.* They protested that their policy was not actuated by unpatriotic motives. They were for the glory of God and the deliverance of the king (*ibid.*, p. 80).

[2] Isambert, xiv. 135-140 (19th March 1563).

[3] He agreed to the treaty, however. See La Ferrière, p. 111.

edict of January had allowed to subsist. There was, in truth, some ground for the reproach of Coligny that Condé and the nobles had sacrificed the spiritual interests of the people to their own material advantage. Condé's irenical inclinations were undoubtedly stimulated by the promise of the office of Lieutenant-General, which the death of Navarre shortly before had left vacant, and he joined the Constable, with all the more alacrity on this account, in the task of compelling the English garrison in Havre to surrender.

Would Catholic and Protestant accept the compromise and abide by it? The Huguenots were not satisfied; the Catholics grudged them in many places the benefit of the peace, and disobeyed the injunction to cease molesting them, in spite of the appointment of commissioners to execute the edict. Catherine and L'Hôpital were, at least, anxious to enforce it as a permanent solution of the problem, and peace depended on the success of their efforts. To this end they resorted to the plan of declaring the majority of Charles,[1] and thereby enable the queen to act more independently of party chiefs, as long at least as she could retain her influence over her son. Charles had reassured her on this point, and he made the world aware of the fact by repeating it in the presence of the Parliament of Rouen, where his majority was proclaimed.[2] The device would, too, rid her of the necessity of fulfilling her promise of the Lieutenant-Generalship to Condé. Inspired by L'Hôpital, she refused the request of Pius IV. to publish the intolerant decrees of the Council of Trent. On the other hand, she was inclined to keep a tight rein on the Huguenots, whose restive love of liberty was distasteful, and might, she conceived, become dangerous to her; and L'Hôpital was forced, in spite of remonstrances,[3] to lend himself on various pretexts to serious infringements of the Peace of Amboise.[4] The Huguenots were consequently becoming increasingly alarmed, and the conference of Catherine and Alva at Bayonne in June 1565 intensified their apprehensions. Her reputation for deep dissimulation sometimes earned her credit or discredit for projects with which, at this period, she had not the slightest sympathy, and these apprehensions had no real ground in any murderous agreement between the two, as contemporary historians believed, and their modern borrowers have

[1] Isambert, xiv. 147-150.

[2] *Ibid.*, xiv. 149.

[3] See Histoire des Princes de Condé, i. 255, 256.

[4] See Isambert, xiv. 159 (December 1563), edict declaring that the Protestants may only exercise their religion in the towns besieged during the war; and *ibid.*, 170-172 (June 1564), which forbids the Reformed worship in towns where the court was residing.

long repeated. Alva, indeed, urged Catherine to dismiss L'Hôpital, and adopt repressive measures, but he found her much too wary to commit herself to a policy which would have meant the renewal of civil war, and was forced, in his letters to his master, to confess himself foiled.[1] Both Alva and his master were, however, intent on the execution of such a deadly scheme against the Protestants of the Netherlands, as they would fain have seen adopted against those of France, and the duke's progress thither with a Spanish army along the eastern French frontier in the summer of 1567 redoubled the fear of the Huguenots. The levy of six thousand Swiss by Charles, ostensibly to watch the Spaniards, augmented their excitement. Might not these Swiss be turned against themselves if Catherine saw a chance of overwhelming the sectaries once for all? If the Peace of Amboise had been infringed in spite of protestations of good faith, might not the opportunity be taken to suppress it outright, as Lorraine and the bigots were sedulously exhorting?[2] The Huguenot chiefs met at Valery and Chatillon to deliberate the course of action. They had assurances from friends at court that their destruction was resolved, and viewing the steady march of the Swiss as a proof of the sinister design, and remembering that no less than three thousand Huguenots had been massacred since the promulgation of the Peace of Amboise, determined to march on Meaux, seize the Cardinal of Lorraine, and free the king from his evil influence. Charles and the cardinal barely escaped to Paris, whither they were followed by Condé at the head of a few thousand men. With this small force he risked the indecisive battle of St Denis (10th November 1567) against the greatly superior army of the Constable, who paid for his dubious advantage with his life. Condé retired into Lorraine to effect a junction with six thousand mercenaries under Duke John Casimir. With these reinforcements he retraced his steps to Orleans, and laid siege to Chartres. The royal army had also swelled, and the kingdom was once more the prey of pillage and massacre. The energy displayed by the Huguenots happily played into the hands of the chancellor, and lent force to the argument that it was wiser to cultivate their friendship than risk further the consequences of their determined hostility. These men, he generously contended, were fighting in self-defence, and they would have been fools had they submissively courted destruction. Even the brute beasts, perceiving

[1] For an able account of the conference see Baird, ii. 167-176.

[2] Aumale, a Catholic author, whose freedom from undue bias is very admirable, believes, on the authority of Davila, that this was now the set purpose of the court (Histoire des Princes de Condé, i. 282, 283).

the coming storm, seek a timely shelter.[1] This argument might not commend itself to the cardinal, the advocate of every species of subterfuge and violence in defence of the faith and in outrage of human right, but it impressed Catherine, and the re-establishment of the Edict of Amboise, without the restrictions subsequently imposed on it, put an end to further hostilities (Peace of Longjumeau, 23rd March 1568).[2]

Coligny again dissented from the decision to sheathe the sword on the strength of specious assurances, without material guarantees for their fulfilment. The sequel was speedily to prove the cogency of his objections. The outrages on the Huguenots continued; reprisals were frequent; restrictive ordinances recommenced. They were required to declare on oath that they would never take arms except at the king's command, to refrain, in other words, from all attempts at self-defence; while the Cardinal of Lorraine, Pius V., and Philip II. were urgent in their exhortations to root out heresy, and Catholic associations started up in defence of the policy and the practice of intolerance by assassination and massacre. Most ominous of all, L'Hôpital, who had gained considerable influence over the young king, and had consequently become odious to Catherine, was forced to retire from the council board and give up the seals to Morvilliers. His retirement deprived the Huguenots of their most earnest and conscientious advocate, and accentuated the necessity of standing on their guard. The chancellor's moderation had been a thorn in the flesh of the bigots, who have besmirched his memory as an enemy of his country and of religion. "The chancellor," angrily burst out the cardinal in Catherine's presence, "is the sole cause of all the troubles in France, and had the Parliament its will, his head would not remain twenty-four hours on his shoulders."[3] "On the contrary, madam," retorted L'Hôpital, not without point, "the cardinal is the original cause of all the mischiefs that have chanced within these eight years, not only to France, but to the whole of Christendom. In proof of which I refer him to the common report of those who most favour him." L'Hôpital had in truth spent his strength in the task not merely of moderating religious strife, but in striving to heal the wound which it inflicted on France, by enlightened legislation, as the Ordinance of Moulins and other reforming measures testify.[4]

[1] The substance of these representations is quoted by Baird from a memorial in which the chancellor committed them to writing (ii. 232-234).

[2] Isambert, xiv. 226. See also Tavannes, Petitot, xxv. 1-34, and Hist. des Princes de Condé, i. 279-335.

[3] Baird, ii. 264.

[4] See Isambert, xiv. 189-212, and 213-217.

The dissolution of the partnership of principle and expediency without conviction, though inevitable, was an unmitigated calamity to France. With L'Hôpital's retirement, the ascendency of the cardinal in the council, with the Italian Birago, who became chancellor shortly after, and Gondi, who became Duke of Retz, as his henchmen, was for the nonce complete. At last, then, "the deer was in the toils, the chase was ready," as Tavannes significantly hinted. In other words, the plan of seizing and decapitating the Huguenot leaders, which had long been favoured by the bigots, should now be put in execution. Tavannes claims the credit of giving Condé and Coligny warning.[1] They had just time to escape by a hazardous flight from Noyers to La Rochelle. The court thereupon threw down the gauntlet in two edicts—the first revoking all previous ones in favour of toleration, and commanding all Protestant ministers to depart the kingdom within fifteen days; the second depriving all Protestants of their charges in the universities and the Parliaments.[2] In this perilous situation Condé and Coligny turned once more to the Queen of England, and succeeded in obtaining 100,000 crowns wherewith to hire German reinforcements. In spite of English sympathy and German co-operation, victory once more favoured the royalist armies in this third civil war. Condé was defeated at Jarnac (13th March 1569) by Tavannes (Duke Henry of Anjou being only nominal commander-in-chief for his brother), taken prisoner, and treacherously shot by one of Anjou's captains. His death was a terrible blow, for, in spite of his faults, his merit as a general and his position as a prince of the blood had stood the Huguenot cause in good stead. His courage, his humanity, his courtesy, lent to his character a touch of true chivalry and a certain elevation, if his moral laxity and his want of seriousness only too sadly tarnished it. With all his faults, he was a leader in the great cause of human liberty, and it is to his credit that, though his opposition to the court was not always disinterested, his *rôle* was not merely that of a factious prince of the blood. His place as leader now fell to a man of purer and firmer, if less brilliant character. Though the Huguenots elected young Henry of Navarre as their nominal chief, Coligny was their Nestor and Ajax alike. Another defeat, the most disastrous yet sustained, overwhelmed his army at Moncontour (3rd October 1569), where he lost 12,000 in killed and wounded, and all his artillery and baggage. But

[1] Petitot, xxv. 36. In view of Tavannes' share in the massacre of St Bartholomew, the claim seems somewhat dubious.

[2] Isambert, xiv. 228 (September 1568), and Baird, ii. 275, 276.

Coligny, like William of Orange, was greater in defeat than in battle, and though the tide of disaster continued to run strongly for a time, his courage and resource did not fail him. He succeeded in keeping the field for nearly eighteen months, and latterly even in snatching some considerable successes, and menacing the capital itself. He thus convinced Catherine once again that force was no remedy against the Huguenots. Pius V. might exhort to perseverance in the laudable enterprise of slaying without mercy in the holy cause. The Huguenots were hard to kill, even with the savage incitements of a truculent Pope to whet the thirst for blood. Charles' jealousy of his brother, and his growing dislike of war, were drawing him nearer to Marshal Montmorency and the party of humanity and moderation. His mother accordingly found it in her interest to take her cue from them in preference to the cardinal, and negotiate the Peace of St Germain (8th August 1570). It guaranteed a general amnesty, the restoration of all confiscated property, liberty of worship in all places where it had hitherto been celebrated, except in Paris and ten leagues around, and where the court happened to be residing, the cession of four cities of refuge—La Rochelle, Cognac, Montauban, and La Charité on the Loire,—and the establishment of a special court, to which the Huguenots could appeal, in all the parliaments of the kingdom.[1]

There seems to have been a sincere desire on the part of Charles to make this a final peace. The confidence he reposed in men like Marshal Montmorency and Cardinal Chatillon, Coligny's brother, is proof of this. That confidence was erelong extended to Coligny himself. It looked as if Charles, under their enlightened guidance, would assert his individuality in favour of a permanent toleration and a foreign policy hostile to the sinister bigotry of the Guises and Philip II., whose victory over the Turks, at Lepanto, fully a year later (October 1571), roused his apprehensions. Coligny's plan, evolved by Louis of Nassau, was to form an alliance with England and the empire against Philip, and intervene in the struggle in the Netherlands, on behalf of William of Orange and the Dutch patriots. The annexation of a portion of the Low Countries to France should be the reward of this patriotic policy. The scheme was heartily espoused by William of Orange, and in order to pave the way for the English alliance, the Duke of Anjou was proposed as a husband for Queen Elizabeth, and was to obtain the sovereignty of the Netherlands.

[1] Isambert, xiv. 229, 230, and see Baird, ii. 363, 364. Tavannes gives a long account of this war, in which he played so conspicuous a part, and won the marshal's baton. See Petitot, xxv. 38-180.

Though the duke drew back, his brother Alençon was suggested in his place, and the alliance was signed on the 22nd April 1572. On the strength of it, Louis of Nassau was allowed to raise a force of Huguenots, with which he captured Mons in May. Holland and Zealand were up in revolt, and the first steps of the proposed crusade against Philip had been successful. Another marriage project, that of young Henry of Navarre with Charles' sister, Margaret, should confirm the bond between the Huguenots and the court. Catherine, however, was hostile to Coligny's growing influence as likely to efface her own, as well as eager to advance her favourite son, Henry of Anjou, the leader of the bigoted Spanish party, and Charles, as the sequel was to prove, could not be trusted to assert himself against her intrigues. He was as unstable as he was impulsive, and might shake off Coligny as easily as he had embraced him. Events in the Netherlands decided her beyond recall to throw her influence into the opposite scale. The Huguenot troops of La Noue and Genlis were discomfited by Alva's veterans at Valenciennes and Mons. Their discomfiture was Coligny's death warrant. The idea of a massacre of the Huguenot leaders was no new one, and the celebration of the marriage of Henry of Navarre and Margaret of Valois should at last furnish their enemies with their opportunity. The marriage ceremony was performed by Cardinal Bourbon, on Monday, the 18th of August. The next four days were devoted to extravagant festivities. On Friday, the 22nd, Coligny was shot at and wounded by the assassin Maurevel, from the window of a house belonging to the Duke of Guise, as he was walking from the Louvre to his hotel. Maurevel was not new to the work of assassination, and he had been hired to repeat an infamous deed by Catherine, Anjou, and Guise. The wound was not mortal, and Charles, accompanied by his guilty but dissembling mother, hastened in unaffected anger to offer his condolence and promise vengeance. His would-be murderers were determined, however, that he should not escape, if only to hide their own infamy, and next day they succeeded only too well in insinuating into Charles' weak mind the false belief of a Huguenot plot to embroil the kingdom in another war. Only the admiral's death could frustrate the nefarious design. "God's death," he shouted in a frenzy, "kill the admiral, and every Huguenot in France, that none may be left to reproach me with the deed." The fruit of these infernal words was the Massacre of St Bartholomew on the following day, 24th August 1572. On that fateful morning the bell of St Germain L'Auxerrois tolled the signal for the commission of one of the most awful crimes in the history of a nation. Coligny was the

first victim. In answer to the question of the leader of a band of assassins who broke into his apartment, whether he were the admiral, he calmly answered in the affirmative. "Young man," he added, "you ought to have regard to my age and my infirmity, but you will, nevertheless, not shorten my life." The murderers struck him down and threw his bleeding body into the court below, where the Duke of Guise and others of his mortal enemies received it with kicks and curses. After the head had been cut off, to be sent as a trophy to the Cardinal of Lorraine at Rome, the trunk was mutilated and dragged through the streets, and finally exposed on a gibbet at Montfaucon. It is a terrible commentary on the party passion and brutal fanaticism of the age, that the man whose remains were treated in so disgustingly savage a fashion was one of the noblest characters of his age. No man that acts a leading part in so bitterly contentious an age is blameless. It is the glory of Coligny that he was so blameless.[1]

The fate of the leader was the fate of many of the Huguenot gentlemen who had accompanied him to the capital, while Henry of Navarre and the young Prince of Condé escaped, at the price of the renunciation of their creed. The Count de la Rochefoucauld, the Marquis de Reuel, Baron Soubise, Teligny, Coligny's son-in-law, and many more swelled the roll of distinguished victims. For several days the bloody work continued, and even the insensate king stooped to murder by shooting at the fugitives from a window of the Louvre with the fiendish cry, "Kill, kill." Private enmities contributed to the zeal of the assassins, and neither reputation nor virtue could shield those, like the philosopher Ramus, or the jurist La Place, whom personal hatred had marked out for destruction. Even the holders of benefices, on which some nefarious hireling had cast covetous eyes, were ruthlessly cut down, and the pillage of the houses of the victims tended to increase their numbers to an appalling extent. Every thief and cut-throat in Paris was busy with the work of the Lord in those terrible days. The horror of them passes description. Paris was turned into the lowest hell, and in the words of a contemporary writer, "the paper would shed tears" at the recital of all the monstrous cruelties perpetrated in this savage orgie of fanaticism, lust, and ruffianism. "The streets were covered with dead bodies, the river stained, the doors and gates of the palace bespattered with blood. Waggon loads of corpses, men, women, girls, even infants, were thrown into the Seine, while streams of blood ran in many quarters of the city."[2] "A horse-dealer," to quote the same witness,

[1] For sympathetic portrait of Coligny, see Delaborde, Coligny, 3 tomes (1879).

[2] Relation du Massacre de la St Barthélemy in Archives Curieuses, vii. 131, 132.

"having received a shower of blows in his house, was dragged to the river. His two children, following the murderers, attempted to rescue him, and clinging to their father, were dragged along, hacked, and thrown into the river together. Spire Niquet, a poor bookbinder, who was the support of seven children, was slowly roasted over a bonfire of the books found in his house, and then pitched, half dead, into the water. . . . They forced the wife of a procurator, Le Clerc, to pass before the body of her butchered husband, and then drowned her, though she was in an advanced state of pregnancy. The same fate befell the wife of Antoine Saunier, who was in the same condition. . . . In the Rue St Martin, another woman, about to be delivered, had taken refuge on the roof of her house, and after being killed, was ripped up and her infant dashed against the wall. The wife of Jean de Cologne, mercer, was betrayed by her own daughter and murdered, the daughter marrying one of her mother's murderers. The Commissary Aubert thanked the miscreants who had massacred his wife. One of these wretches entered a house, and after killing husband and wife, put their two little children into a basket, and carrying it through the town emptied it into the river. One little girl was bathed in the blood of her butchered father and mother, and threatened with the same fate if she ever became a Huguenot."[1] "The greater number were killed by blows from daggers or poignards. These were the least maltreated, for others were hacked in every part of their bodies, mutilated, mocked, outraged by low jests. Several old men had their heads knocked on the kerbstones, and were then thrown into the river. One infant was dragged through the streets behind a cord, fastened round its neck, by a pack of boys from nine to ten years old. Another baby, seized by a murderer, began to play with his beard and to smile, when the diabolical barbarian, instead of being moved to compassion, plunged his dagger into its body and threw it into the water."[2]

These awful scenes had not ceased in the streets of Paris before they were being repeated in many other cities. Bordeaux, Lyons, Rouen, Castres, Toulouse, Meaux, Orleans, Angers, Bourges were the more conspicuous sufferers. The same ulterior motives entered into the massacre in the provinces as at Paris. Murder became a sort of speculation as well as a religious duty. It was a profitable investment for this world as well as the next if a Catholic heir to some property murdered its Protestant owner, or the Catholic defendant in some lawsuit made away with his Protestant pursuer.

[1] Relation du Massacre, vii. 146, 147.

[2] *Ibid.*, vii. 147.

From one cause or other the number of the slain amounted to somewhere between 20,000 and 100,000, the lowest and the highest figures given by different historians. Probably the first total is nearer the mark.

These facts must speak for themselves. Yet the most awful fact has still to come. It is the fact that men professing the Christian religion in its orthodox form dared to associate Almighty God with these fiendish atrocities and to render thanks to Heaven for this glorious vindication of the faith. It takes one's breath away to read the following sentence in a letter of Cardinal D'Armagnac, written to the king a few days after the massacre:—"Sire, we have been informed of the happy victory which God has given you over His enemies and yours, for which we return thanks to the Divine Majesty, and hope that, in recognition of this great mercy, your majesty will strictly banish all heretics out of the realm, in order that God may be served and honoured in accordance with the constitution of the Catholic Church."[1] Doubtless this bloody performance was not all, or even mainly, the direct work of religious fanaticism. It was the outcome of various passions—greed, lust, ruffianism, in which religion to some extent mingled. Incredible as it may seem, ignorance and superstition even associated miracles with it. A hawthorn is said to have suddenly blossomed in the cemetery of the Innocents. "A miracle, a miracle," cried the credulous crowd, and with thanksgiving to God for this extraordinary mark of His favour, fell to the bloody work with redoubled zeal.[2] In considering the question how far the Catholic Church compromised itself in these brutal excesses, the historian is bound to give due weight to the fact that the motives of the murderers were largely political or personal. But the Catholic Church unfortunately took its own share, if not of the responsibility, at least of the odium and the guilt. Armagnac was not alone in his panegyrism. His voice found an echo in St Peter's itself, and it is certain that the Pope and his predecessor had not been slack in exhortations to the use of violent repressive methods, even if they were not the direct authors of the massacre. At all events the infamous conduct of Pope and cardinal, after the event, abundantly proves that they were only too ready to identify themselves with these bloody scenes in the interest of the Church. Pope Gregory XIII. not only wrote a

[1] Lettres Inédites du Cardinal D'Armagnac, Revue Historique, ii. 558, 559.

[2] Relation, vii. 155; see also Mémoires de Claude de Haton, edited for the Documents Inédites by M. Bourguelot, ii. 681, 682. The author gives a long account of the massacre from the Catholic point of view, ii. 656-696.

letter of congratulation to Charles, but had a medal struck in commemoration of the infernal tragedy. Probably Roman Catholics of to-day are thoroughly ashamed of one Pope at least, as were doubtless not a few in this black year 1572.

As to the responsibility of Catherine, Anjou, Guise, and of course the miserable Charles himself, there can be no cavilling. The first impulse of mother and son was to disclaim their responsibility, and lay the blame on the Duke of Guise and his faction, Coligny's sworn enemies. Charles actually sent letters to this effect to the governors of cities on the day of the admiral's murder. This was an embarrassing as well as a hypocritical course, for the Duke of Guise was not disposed to be made a scapegoat, and let it be known that the deed had been done by royal command. Thereupon came the formal avowal to the Parliament by the king, who took refuge in a pretended Huguenot conspiracy to kill himself, his mother, and his brothers, and put the Prince of Condé in his place. The Parliament stooped to the infamy not only of legalising this abominable lie, but of approving the vilest methods of absolute power against the security of the subject.[1] "He who knows how to dissimulate, knows how to rule," said the first president, Christopher de Thou, approvingly quoting Louis XI. Charles then published a declaration in which he avowed himself to all the world the author of the massacre.[2] Unhappily he spoke the truth this time, though he continued to adduce false reasons for his action, and thereby invested his name with the opprobrium of an awful villainy. He was, it is true, but the instrument of his villainous mother, and the confession reveals that mother in her true character as a woman of essentially low instincts, to whom murder is no crime, dissimulation no sin, conscience no restraint—the worthy dam of such a brood as Charles IX. and Henry III. It affords, too, a striking example of the insensate folly of placing power in such hands, in virtue of mere hereditary right. It must surely have been a mad world when a feeble young man of twenty-two could, by a single word, let all the harpies of hell loose in the capital and the kingdom of France. Yet such is this France of 1572. Heaven and hell are for it in the hands of this petty creature. Dress him in royal ermine, set him on a throne—which it does not need Napoleon to remind us is but a piece of wood covered with cloth—forget not the appanage of a sycophant court to hide the inanity of his brains, and you have Charles IX., King of France, lord of conscience, disposer of the lives of fifteen millions of fellow-mortals, almost God on earth to the majority thereof.

[1] Isambert, xiv. 257; and see Baird, ii. 489-493. [2] *Ibid.*, xiv. 257-259.

Charles IX. is King of France; to sane reason he is also king of bedlam. Only these stern Huguenot men are disposed to be of the number no longer who own allegiance to this wretched conventional tyranny. Henceforth the republican spirit is strong in the Huguenot camp, as shall be apparent when we presently cast a glance at the writings of their political thinkers.

For the present they were stunned and disorganised. The old leaders were dead, exiled, or converted by the alternative of death. They were reanimated by the heroism of the citizens of La Rochelle, who found an able commander in La Noue, and set a royal army at defiance for several months. Charles was fain to raise the siege under the pretext of the election of the Duke of Anjou to the throne of Poland, agree to the Treaty of La Rochelle, and terminate what is known as the fourth civil war by a new edict of pacification (Edict of Boulogne,[1] July 1573). The Huguenots had lost all faith in the permanence of these "pacifications," and made use of the respite to organise. Those of Languedoc divided the province into two governments, and practically constituted themselves into a state within the State, which should treat with the king on its own terms and make war to enforce them. With these their co-religionists of Guienne allied themselves. The massacre had forced them to become a political party with a definite policy, tending to republicanism, and demands of which full toleration was a *sine quâ non*, and which they were determined to enforce. It was a dubious policy to pursue, for it tended to nurse faction and disintegrate the kingdom, but the inveterate bad faith of the court, as evidenced by a plot to seize La Rochelle, accentuated the necessity of preparation in self-defence. In this resolute action they could count on the sympathy of the growing moderate Catholic party formed by the Montmorencies and supported by the Duke of Alençon, Charles' youngest brother, in opposition to the court. Thus on the eve of the death of Charles (May 1574), they had become a powerful organisation, ready to challenge rather than beg terms, with the Prince of Condé, who had escaped to Germany and renounced his forced submission to the mass,[2] eager to fill his father's place as their leader.

The new king, Henry III., like his brother, was a prince of weak constitution, dyspeptic, and moribund. The Venetian ambassador praises his intelligence, his affability, his piety. He forgets to add that his piety was not incompatible with a shameless moral laxity and a scandalously corrupt court, which, however, as in the case of

[1] Isambert, xiv. 261.

[2] Histoire des Princes de Condé, ii. 108-111.

so many of his predecessors, accorded very well with a fervent orthodoxy. Though Henry had shone as the nominal hero of Jarnac and Moncontour, he had no liking for war, was in truth too insipid and languid to like even any amusement, like the chase or the tournament, which involved exertion. His only passion was dogs and birds, of which his rooms were full, his only exercise dancing and tennis. He was a mere dandy on the throne, who dressed richly, used perfumes lavishly, wore much jewellery, spent profusely, and was much concerned for court etiquette.[1] Catherine's selfish love of power kept her sons in tutelage even after they had attained their majority, and killed what little strength of individuality they might possess. Her influence, according to the ambassador, had become absolutely baneful. Her aim previously had been to moderate and conciliate; her anxiety now was to foment strife and resist conciliation.[2]

The accession of Henry, who, as Duke of Anjou, had been the mainstay of the Guises and the bigots, intensified the opposition of the Montmorencies and the moderates, or "Politiques." Though the leaders had their own ends to serve, and were more or less opportunists, this party embraced many men who wished to see reason and patriotism prevail over bigotry and party.[3] Its true representative is L'Hôpital and not Alençon, whose motive, like that of many of the magnates who joined him, was personal advantage and opposition to the court. "At present," wrote Michele in 1575, "there is little talk of 'the religion' (at court of course), which now plays a secondary *rôle;* people speak now, not of the Huguenots, but of the malcontents. Their number is large, for they embrace the greater part of the nobles, Huguenot as well as Catholic, the middle class, finally people of every condition. Thus the struggle is waged no longer in the name of religion, but in the name of the commonweal, as in the time of Louis XI. The malcontents have formulated their pretensions in a manifesto published after Monsieur (Alençon) left the court. They wish a thorough reform in head and members, in everything that concerns religion, justice, politics, the army, and the

[1] For a portrait of Henry see Relations des Ambassadeurs Venetiens (Michele), ii. 234-236; cf. Lippomano, *ibid.*, ii. 614-622.

[2] Relations, ii. 242-244.

[3] "Le nom de politique a ésté inventé pour ceux qui preferent le repos du royaume, ou de leur particulier au salut de leur ame, et à la religion, qui aiment mieux que le royaume demeure en paix sans Dieu, qu'en guerre pour luy. Ces politiques disent: ne permettant qu'une religion, toute la France sera remplie de guerre; permettant les deux c'est la paix et le repos du royaume" (Tavannes, Petitot, xxiv. 322, 323).

entire government of this State."[1] Unfortunately this new league of the commonweal was, like its predecessors nearly a century earlier, to a large extent a matter of family rivalry or aggrandisement—Montmorency and Alençon against Guise and his partisans—and threatened hopeless commotion and confusion. Between the two the king is impotent, and must therefore be the tool of the one or the other.[2] It was, however, the interest of the Huguenots, to whom the King of Navarre once more rallied, to cultivate the opponents of Catherine and the Guises, and their alliance took definite shape at a conference at Milhau (February 1575). They agreed in demanding toleration and the convocation of the States-General to reform the State and counteract the overgrown power of the Crown, and resolved to prosecute the war, which had already broken out for the fifth time, with vigorous co-operation. Though Condé marched from the eastern frontier with a force of German mercenaries to join Alençon, the war was a mere fizzle of martial demonstration, except for the misery it entailed on the people. It terminated most advantageously for the Huguenots, however. The fifth edict of pacification[3] (May 1576) forms the high-water mark of concession to Protestantism before the Edict of Nantes. It legalised the free exercise of the Reformed worship throughout the whole kingdom, with the exception of Paris and two leagues around, permitted its adherents to hold consistories, provincial and general synods, and build churches, established in each Parliament a court consisting of an equal number of Catholics and Protestants, to judge all contentions between members of either communion, relieved all who had abjured the Reformed faith from any obligation to abide by such abjuration, legalised Protestant marriage, opened all universities, colleges, and schools to Protestant children, declared all members of the Reformed Church capable of holding any office in the State, condemned the Massacre of St Bartholomew, and indemnified the widows and children of the victims, quashed the judgment rendered by the Parliament against Coligny, and ordered it to be erased from its registers, reinstated those who had been banished, declared null all the proceedings against the Huguenots since the reign of Henry II., and made over eight fortified towns to the confederates as a guarantee of good faith. In order further to consolidate the peace, the confederate leaders were liberally rewarded with government and other offices.

The edict, whether sincerely meant or not, was a monument of enlightened statesmanship, but it was too good to last. It was accepted as a challenge by the bigots, and their reply was the forma-

[1] Relations, ii. 226. [2] *Ibid.*, ii. 228, 234. [3] Isambert, xiv. 281-302.

tion of an association in Picardy—germ of the League—in defence of the faith. Its promoters were Baron D'Humières and the Jesuits; its object to uphold the supremacy of the Catholic Church, to limit the royal authority by the States-General, to restore the ancient liberties of the times of Clovis, and to assert these aims by force of arms against all and sundry. Other kindred associations sprang rapidly up,[1] particularly at Paris, and the discovery of some treasonable papers at Lyons showed to what length some of these zealots were prepared to go, if Henry should abide by the obnoxious edict. They were ready, it seems, to seize the king, confine him in a monastery, and proclaim the Duke of Guise as democratic and orthodox sovereign, in virtue of the reputed descent of his family from Charlemagne. They took care to secure the nomination of deputies sound in the faith to the States-General, which met at Blois in December. The Protestants, who had demanded their convocation, were represented only by a single deputy.[2] In vain did Henry press the assembly to ratify the policy of conciliation.[3] In vain did Jean Bodin, the greatest political thinker of the century and deputy for Vermandois, descant on the fatuity of using force to constrain religious conviction. The majority demanded the forcible suppression of heresy, and Bodin could only hope to frustrate a recourse to arms by persuading the Third Estate to refuse a subsidy. This he succeeded in doing, but hostilities nevertheless recommenced in the following April (the sixth civil war), to end, as usual, in another makeshift arrangement in favour of the Huguenots (Peace of Bergerac and Edict of Poitiers),[4] in spite of their desertion by Alençon and Montmorency Damville. It was broken two and a half years later by a miserable intrigue intended to intensify the discord between Navarre and his wife. It was a pure *affaire de femme* hatched in the frivolous and scandalous court of a debauched king. Because Henry slandered his sister for petty political purposes, Catholic and Pro-

[1] The Catholics had already formed local associations in opposition to the Huguenots, but they had hitherto been but temporary; see, for instance, Tavannes, Petitot, xxiv. 450-457.

[2] Les Luttes Religieuses en France au Seizième Siècle, par le Vicomte de Meaux, 182.

[3] "Il avait," he said, "finalement pris la voie de douceur et conciliation" (Isambert, xiv. 315). For the deliberations of the Estates see Isambert, xiv. 314-318; and Baudrillart, Bodin et son Temps, 117-127. Bodin kept a journal of the proceedings. One of the fruits of the deliberations of the assembly was the celebrated Ordinance of Blois for the reform of the kingdom (Isambert, xiv. 380-477).

[4] Isambert, xiv. 330-341 (September 1577).

testant must needs rush to arms for the seventh time, and kill and pillage for nine months before another hollow truce (Peace of Fleix)[1] enabled them to worship God in tolerable quiet for the next six years.

It was but the calm before the storm—a storm not merely of civil war, but of revolution. The death in 1584 of the Duke of Alençon, or Anjou, to give him his later title, who had accepted the sovereignty of the Netherlands in 1580, raised the question of the succession. Henry III. being childless, and likely to remain so, the King of Navarre now became his heir presumptive. The Catholics were thus brought face to face, not merely with the question of tolerating heresy, but of tolerating a heretic king. That a Huguenot should wear the crown of France naturally seemed to the bigots of that day a monstrous presumption, as unthinkable as the idea of a Catholic sovereign of a Protestant State was to their opponents. If Henry of Navarre would not agree to renounce his Huguenot creed and turn against his co-religionists, he should never sit on the throne of France. This Navarre was not prepared to do. He might have agreed to be converted, as he indeed afterwards did. His convictions were not formed in the same rigid mould as those of the Prince of Condé, and according to Montaigne, neither he nor Henry of Guise had much religion of any kind at this period. But he was not the man to sacrifice his co-religionists, and his conversion would only be had at the price of toleration. On these terms the bigots would not entertain his candidature for a moment, and Henry, with Du Plessis-Mornay for his mentor, had begun betimes to safeguard his interests by an alliance with the Queen of England and the German and Swiss Protestants (Treaty of Magdeburg, 15th December 1584),[2] which bound the contracting parties to maintain the rights of the Huguenots. In opposition to Navarre, Duke Henry of Guise had his own scheme of aggrandisement to serve as well as the orthodoxy of the crown to safeguard, and had not been slack in his preparations. Catholic intolerance was a very strong card to play in pursuit of his interest, and powerful allies were ready to renew and join the League. In the same month that Henry concluded the Treaty of Magdeburg, Guise and his brother Mayenne met the representatives of Cardinal Bourbon, the Catholic nominee, in conference at the castle of Joinville, and agreed to unite in the prosecution of a common policy. It is from this meeting that the origin of the Catholic League as a national and international union dates, and

[1] Isambert, xiv. 485 (November 1580).

[2] Aumale, Histoire des Princes de Condé, 138-146; De Meaux, Luttes Religieuses, 203-205.

its principles and objects are contained in the manifesto published, under the name of the Cardinal Bourbon, in the following March. The manifesto is pitched in a very patriotic key.[1] The Leaguists are patriots, reformers, godly men, above all things. Protestantism is pestilential sedition, which aims at the subversion of religion, Catholicism only being religion. The maintenance of religion is the main thing in the manifesto, and the prospect of a heretic sovereign as successor to Henry III. is monstrous abomination. Religion is the grand plea of every hypocrite and fanatic in France in this year 1585, and the League combines both categories. The king, it further seems, is altogether under control of these pestilent heretics, the kingdom in danger of subjection to heresy. The Huguenots have much to answer for, and the Leaguists do lay it on when they are at it. They have usurped the royal authority, they covet the possessions of the Church, as in sacrilegious England, they have appealed to the German Protestants, they have deprived several governors of provinces and commanders of towns of their charges, they have pillaged the royal revenues, and they have determined to dispose of the crown at their pleasure. From their pernicious influence the States-General of Blois had striven to save France, and to the States-General the cardinal would once more appeal. In them dwells the real supremacy in the State, the right to remedy all abuses. In vain had they laboured, for religion is dishonoured, the nobles enslaved, humiliated, diminished in their honours and rights, the people oppressed by taxation. For these reasons Charles de Bourbon and his adherents are resolved to intervene, in order to rescue the Church and maintain it by force of arms, restore the ancient privileges of the nobles, free the people from its burdens, uphold the rights of the Parliament, and ensure the convocation of the States-General at frequent intervals for the better government of the kingdom. Lastly, Charles de Bourbon, cardinal though he be, is determined to enforce his rights against his heretic nephew of Navarre. In all this the spirit of the feudal magnate is very apparent, though it is clothed in a pseudo-democratic language. The Crown shall be deprived of its powers, not that the people may resume them, but that the magnates may regain them. The Pope, too, shall have his share greatly enhanced,[2] and once more play a

[1] See Archives Curieuses, xi. 9-19.

[2] The Venetian ambassador notes the fact that as the result of these long contentions the influence of the Pope had greatly increased in France. Before the outbreak of these troubles the papal power was almost *nil*, now it is at its zenith. The Catholics have been inspired by a new zeal, and the Pope is the high priest of their devotion (Relations, ii. 162-166).

master *rôle* over the State. The Duke of Guise in particular shall have more than his share, for Charles de Bourbon is a mere straw figure to cover the ulterior ambition of the would-be dictator. There is a mixture of the true and the false in all this rhetoric. That Henry III. was a weakling and a voluptuary, and misgoverned the State, is only too evident; that Charles de Bourbon would have ruled to better purpose is nevertheless very doubtful; that the League was a focus of feudal reaction and the tool of the Guises is certain; that the *régime* of the States-General at this price was inadvisable, is not less certain; and that this union of bigots and hypocrites, who court Philip II. and the Inquisition, would have burned every Huguenot in France, and was a menace to liberty, needs no proof.

The manifesto was a virtual ultimatum to the king. Henry hesitated. If Navarre would have changed his religion, he would doubtless have adopted him as his heir, and actively opposed the tactics of the Guises. This project being hopeless for the present, he yielded to the solicitations of Catherine, who was eager to secure the succession for her eldest daughter, Claude, and her husband, the Duke of Lorraine, head of the elder branch of the Guise family, and took the side of the League (Treaty of Nemours, July 1585). The result was a fresh edict, which annulled all previous ones in favour of the Huguenots, and ordered those who refused to recant, to leave the kingdom within a stipulated period.[1] Two months later Sixtus V. pronounced Navarre an incorrigible heretic, and not only declared him incapable of succeeding to the throne of France, but dispossessed him of his ancestral kingdom as well (9th September). The Parliament offered a vain resistance to both edict and Bull,[2] and the following winter saw both sides in arms once more (eighth civil war). It was the beginning of a bitter struggle which was only to close with the Peace of Vervins in 1598, happily with the recognition of the toleration which the Huguenots had fought so doggedly to assert. In Henry of Navarre they had a leader who to the skill, the tenacity, the dashing heroism of the born general, added the penetration and the moderation of the born statesman. Navarre justified their confidence by the brilliant victory of Coutras[3] (20th October 1587) over the Duke of Joyeuse. He failed to follow it up, however, and his lack of decision was attributed to a very discreditable motive. Instead of advancing to co-operate with his German allies, he allowed the Duke of Guise to check them at Vimory and Auneau, and hied

[1] Isambert, xiv. 595, 596; see also Thierry, Essai sur le Tiers État, 123.
[2] See Thierry, *ibid.*, 124-126.
[3] See Aumale, Histoire des Princes de Condé, ii. 146 *et seq.*

off to Madame de Gramont in Gascony. He was saved from still more serious consequences of this weak infatuation by the dissensions of his enemies. Henry III. was beginning to wince under the tutelage of the League, which dominated Paris through the democratic and fanatic Committee of the Sixteen,[1] and resolved to assert his authority in the capital. The Sixteen summoned the Duke of Guise to their aid. His arrival was greeted with popular transports. "Saul," cried the Leaguist preachers, in reference to the duke's exploits against the Germans, "has slain his thousands, but David his tens of thousands." Henry, on the other hand, bitterly reproached him for his rebellious conduct, and ordered his guards to enter the city. Whereupon the populace barricaded the streets, and the impotent king was compelled to flee to Chartres. "This is not a revolt, it is a revolution," said Jean Bodin. It was at all events a mortal blow to the royal authority, which had virtually passed into the hands of Guise, and Henry was obliged to recognise the fact, nominate the duke Lieutenant-General of the kingdom,[2] become once more the tool of the League, and summon the States-General at its bidding.[3] The Estates, which met at Blois (16th October 1588),[4] demanded the most abject concessions. They insisted on their virtual sovereignty, and elaborated principles of parliamentary government which would have been admirable but for their motives and tendency. The king derives his authority from the Estates, and to them this authority reverts in case of his illegal conduct. All the important acts of government shall be subject to their sanction, and all legislative acts of the National Assembly shall become law without the addition of the approval of the royal council, or the verification of the Parliament of Paris. The Estates shall control taxation and reform the rampant financial abuses. Above all, heresy must be extirpated, Navarre excluded from the succession even if he turned Catholic, and the war against the Huguenots prosecuted to the bitter end. Herein lay the flaw in this theory of parliamentary government. The Estates arrogated to themselves the supreme power in order to establish an ecclesiastical tyranny. Their idea of parliamentary government is the domination of the League, and Henry III., in resisting their pretensions in favour of absolute monarchy, was in reality the truer friend of liberty of the two. Absolute monarchy was practically, if

[1] Representatives of the sixteen quarters or sections of the city.

[2] Isambert, xiv. 622.

[3] *Ibid.*, xiv. 613-616 and 616-622. Edict renewing the union between the king and the League, July 1588.

[4] *Ibid.*, xiv. 623-631. Cf. Thierry, Essai, 128-130.

not theoretically, tempered to some extent by law; the supremacy of the League meant the supremacy of a faction thirled to intolerance and sedition, and serving the purposes of a feudal reaction, directed by the Duke of Guise.

Henry saw in these demands merely the ambitious pretensions of the duke, and determined to put an end to his domination, and with it that of the League. He had recourse to the vile expedient of assassination—the expedient of weak as well as violent natures in such an age. On the morning of the 23rd December 1588 he summoned the duke to his bedroom in the castle of Blois. While passing through the ante-room he was attacked by the royal guards, and cut down after a desperate struggle. The following day his brother, the Cardinal of Guise, was despatched in the dungeon in which he had been incarcerated. Below the room in which the duke was cut down lay Catherine on her death-bed. "Now I am again King of France," cried Henry on entering her chamber. "The King of Paris is dead." "God grant," was the sombre reply, "that you may not have become king of nothing." The result of this foul deed was, in truth, very different from what the weak monarch expected. Paris gave way to a paroxysm of fury at the news, organised a revolutionary government, renounced its allegiance, with the sanction of the Sorbonne, compelled the Parliament to give legal sanction to its proceedings, and appointed the Duke of Mayenne, Guise's brother, Lieutenant-General of the kingdom. The example of Paris was imitated by many other cities, which paid no heed to Henry's proclamations. His only hope lay in an alliance with the King of Navarre, whom he had disinherited and proscribed at the instigation of the League. A truce for a year[1] paved the way to their reconciliation at Plessis-les-Tours (April 1589) and the active union of the Huguenots and moderate Catholics against the Leaguists. This union proved fatal to Henry, if ultimately fatal to the League. It was while on the march to reduce the rebellious capital that he met his tragic fate at the hands of the monk, Jacques Clément (1st August 1589).[2]

SOURCES OF THIS CHAPTER.—Isambert, Recueil, xiv.; Mémoires of Tavannes in Petitot; Histoire des Princes de Condé, par M. le Duc d'Aumale; History of the Rise of the Huguenots, by H. M. Baird; Épitre au Tigre de la France, edited by M. C. Read; Négociations, Lettres, et Pièces Diverses relatives au Règne de François II., edited for the Documents Inédits by L. Paris; Lettres de Catherine de Medici, edited for *idem* by M. de la Ferrière; Relations des Ambassadeurs

[1] Isambert, xiv. 645-650.

[2] See Monty, Réformateurs et Jésuites, 434-450.

Venetiens; Thierry, Essai sur l'Histoire du Tiers État; Le Comte de la Ferrière, Le XVIe. Siècle et les Valois, d'après les documents inédits du British Museum et du Record Office; Commentaires de Monluc; Relation du Massacre de la St Barthélemy in Archives Curieuses, vii., see also xi.; Lettres Inédits du Cardinal D'Armagnac in Revue Historique, ii.; Mémoires de Claude de Haton, edited for the Documents Inédits by M. Bourguelot; Les Luttes Religieuses en France au XVIe. Siècle, par le Vicomte de Meaux; Baudrillart, Bodin et son Temps; Monty, Réformateurs et Jésuites; Buet, François de Lorraine; Count Jules Delaborde, Gaspard de Coligny, 3 tomes, 1879.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE WARFARE OF THE PEN—HUGUENOT, LEAGUIST, AND POLITIQUE.

THE assassination of Henry is the climax, though not the finale of this long tragedy. One act more—the vindication of his title by Henry of Navarre—has to come. We shall fill it the interlude with a brief survey of the political ideas which this struggle has evolved. These civil wars were wars of the pen as well as the sword. They desolated France, but they fructified the French intellect, and both Huguenot and Catholic made ample use of the printing press in giving a reason for their faith. Nor was their literary activity confined to controversial theology. Theological strife led to political debate, and this period is remarkably fertile in political theories, born of the contentions of the day, but not limited in their interest and their influence to these. Many of the great political doctrines of modern times are already enunciated in this political literature. Some of these are not new—the doctrine of the sovereignty of the people, for instance—some of them are, such as the doctrine of liberty of conscience, and whether old or new, they produced a tremendous ferment in the national mind, and were to become the battle-cries of much of modern political history. Religious persecution was the handmaid of political liberty, for persecution led men to question the right of the persecutor. The Protestant had begun by denying the power of the Pope; he ended by challenging the power of the king—in those countries, at least, where the civil power showed itself hostile to his creed. While he might exalt that power in Germany, England, and even in republican Geneva, as ordained of God, in France, Holland, and Scotland, he questioned its authority, exalted the sovereignty of the people, and refused allegiance to a persecuting king as a usurper and a tyrant. Conscience postulated political as well as moral liberty; resistance to moral was in reality resistance to political slavery. The one was impossible without the other. Of this there is abundant evidence in the works of men like François Hotman and Hubert Languet.

Hotman's life is interesting as typical of that of the cultured Huguenot refugee. Born in 1524, at Paris, where his father was a councillor of Parliament, he studied law at Orleans along with two young men destined, like himself, to fame, Theodore de Bèze, or Beza, and Anne Dubourg. From Orleans he returned to Paris to give public courses on law. His sympathies were, from the first, with the advocates of intellectual and religious emancipation, and in 1548 he joined the ranks of the Protestants. His conversion brought him into collision with his father, and in the same year we find him on the road to Geneva, the magnet of all the young reforming spirits of the day. He was forced to disguise himself, for the road was watched,—forced, too, to work for his bread as a printer at Lyons, where he lurked in the back room of an inn to avoid detection by his father's friends. It was here that he translated the Apology of Socrates and began his correspondence with Calvin. His first letters, begging the boon of an asylum, reveal the ardour of his Protestant faith, which was ready to brave death itself. In the autumn he was at Geneva, and next year Calvin sent him to Lausanne as professor of Latin in the Protestant college, which had displaced the episcopal high school. He remained six years at Lausanne, teaching Beza's Greek class as well as his own, and working at editions of the classics for the Lyons printers. On the death of his father he removed to Strasburg in order to prosecute his claim to his portion of the paternal inheritance. Here he was appointed professor of law in the gymnasium founded by Sturm, and spent the next five years, his reputation as teacher and writer growing the while. Invitations came to him from the Duke of Prussia to accept a chair at the University of Königsberg, and from the Landgrave of Hesse to the professorship of law at Marburg. These he declined, preferring the companionship of Sturm and the near intercourse with his friends at Basle, Zürich, and Geneva, with whom he kept up an active correspondence on the questions at issue between Calvinists and Lutherans. He took part in the irenical conferences at Worms and Frankfurt, and was active, in association with Sturm, Beza, and Farel, in political intercession at the German courts on behalf of the Vaudois and his fellow Protestants of France. By the year 1560, when his professorship at Strasburg came to an end, he was deeply immersed in the ecclesiastical and political intrigues of the time, as an aggressive Protestant and uncompromising Calvinist, and was one of the leading spirits of the conspiracy of Amboise. We next find him employed as one of the agents of the Prince of Condé in negotiating the co-operation of the German Protestant princes in the first civil war. The Peace of

Amboise at length restored him to his native land, and during the next three years he lectured on law at Valence. From Valence he removed in December 1566 to Bourges, in response to the invitation of the Duchess Margaret of Savoy, to fill the chair of law in that celebrated school of jurisprudence. His stay here was brief, for he was forced to flee in the summer of 1567 by a Catholic mob which broke into his house and destroyed his library. He found a friend in the Chancellor L'Hôpital, who appointed him historiographer. After the Peace of St Germain he again ventured to resume his work at Bourges, where he remained till the Massacre of St Bartholomew drove him once more as a refugee to Geneva. Here and at Basle he lived till his death in 1590, giving lectures and writing controversial books and pamphlets, which increased his fame, but did not add materially to his scanty earnings. The last period of his life was a harassing struggle with poverty, and in spite of his fame and his influential connections, he was more than once in desperate straits for the bare means of subsistence. Of Hotman it may be said that he sacrificed himself to the cause to which he devoted his great abilities with all the self-denial of intense conviction. He might have earned affluence as well as fame had he stuck to his profession. He preferred the life of a polemic, and polemic literature did not pay one who wrote from conviction and not for hire.[1]

It was at Geneva in 1573 that he wrote his most celebrated work—the "Franco-Gallia"[2]—which passed through three editions in as many years, and created a sensation in learned circles, and, by means of a translation, in the wider circle of the nation. His aim is to show that the ancient Franco-Gallic monarchy was based on the sovereignty of the people, that this sovereignty was usurped by the kings of a later time, particularly by Louis XI., and that the disorders and sufferings of the present are due to this usurpation. His method is admirable, because it is historic. He questions history, studies the chroniclers in a professedly critical spirit, examines the origins of the monarchy in order to discover which was the ancient form of government in France, and how it became absolute. He possesses the intuition of the true historian, seeking the genesis of the present in the past. He thus differentiates himself from the theorist, who posits his theory and only uses history

[1] This sketch is drawn from the interesting biography by M. Dareste in the Revue Historique, i., based on Hotman's unpublished letters.

[2] The third edition of 1576 includes an additional chapter. It was translated into French under Hotman's supervision. There is an English translation of the edition of 1574, published in 1711, by "the author of the Account of Denmark."

by way of illustration, if he uses it at all. He is, however, not true to his method, for he, too, has his theory, and reads history only to enforce it, but as it is his conclusions that chiefly interest us, let us forbear further criticism of his method, which is good, and of his investigations, which are often uncritical, and state the results of both. These results, it is safe to say, were the political gospel of his co-religionists after the Massacre of St Bartholomew.

The kings of ancient Gaul were not hereditary, but elective, and exercised no unlimited or arbitrary authority. They were no less subject to the people than the people were to them. The Romans deprived the Gauls of their liberty, but they did not succeed in killing the spirit of freedom. From this tyranny they were delivered by the Franks, German freemen who established the kingdom of Franco-Gallia. The Franks, like the ancient Gauls, elected their kings, who held the throne on certain conditions, and deposed them if they failed to fulfil these conditions. There was no certain rule of succession, the choice of the king depending on the will of the council of the people, though it usually elected a member of the royal family for the time being. In this council, annually convened, the supreme administrative power was lodged. Its modern representative is the States-General, and it combined, like them, the three elements of kingly, aristocratic, and popular government, in whose concert lies the harmony of the commonwealth. A most wise institution, for it is essential to liberty that the State should be governed by the authority and advice of those whose interests are so closely concerned, and who should, therefore, be careful to control the king's ministers. The council of the king tends to consult only the royal advantage; the council of the people, the advantage of the kingdom. For this purpose the council or parliament, *i.e.*, the Estates, of the nation met once a year, and every king who ignores this custom is a violator of the law of nations (Hotman holds that all States were anciently governed by a parliamentary council) and an enemy of human society. In those ancient days the king was not surrounded with the meretricious pomp which ministers to his vanity in these degenerate times, for the king rode to the place of meeting in an ox-waggon, and only as the representative of the people, sitting on the golden throne in the midst of the assembly, was he the bearer of the royal majesty. How unlike these profane days of ours, when the king is styled your majesty, whether he sings, or dances, or trifles with his women.[1] The authority of the council is supreme, and embraces all affairs of

[1] Franco-Gallia, p. 130.

State—the election or deposition of the king, the declaration of peace or war, legislation, the disposal of honours, commands, offices, etc. But was not Pepin created king by Pope Zacharias? No, returned Hotman. This is a lying story invented by Pope Gelasius, and repeated by the chroniclers. There is plenty of ancient testimonies to prove that Pepin was chosen by the council of the nation. This council retained its authority throughout the period of the Merovingian and Carolingian kings. It, and not the person who happens to be king, is the real source and possessor of the royal majesty or power.

Observe, he exhorts, the distinction between the king and the kingdom. The king is a single person, the kingdom is the whole body of the people, for whose sake the king is instituted. The king is accidental, the kingdom is permanent. A people may exist without a king, but a king without a people is inconceivable. Though Hugh Capet obtained the kingship by arms and craft, and encroached on the right of the council of the nation to confer honours and jurisdiction—formerly temporary—by making the title of duke, earl, etc., perpetual, the power of the council nevertheless continued under the Capetian dynasty. Witness in particular the adjudication of the kingdom in 1328 to Philip of Valois, in preference to Edward III., and many other instances of the exercise of sovereign power in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The council, however, suffered in its jurisdiction and power by the establishment of the parliaments, whose privileges were gradually increased by the king in order to augment his own power, and counteract that of the Estates. With the increase of parliaments, litigation has increased, but liberty has suffered.

Hotman's book, though not strictly historic, is at least original, though it cannot be called revolutionary, since it is a passionate plea for a return to the ancient constitution of the kingdom. Yet, though conservative in form, it is intensely revolutionary in spirit, strongly reactionary against the absolutist *régime* of the Valois. It insists on the sovereignty of the people as represented by the States-General, insists on it at times in language equally dogmatic and uncompromising with that of Rousseau. It is a plea for democracy, though the democracy is that of the traditional free people of Germans amalgamated with that of ancient Gaul. Though not critically historical, it was accepted as such by contemporary opponents of Valois absolutism, and its influence on Catholics as well as Protestants was immense. It continued to be read when the struggle that inspired it was over, and to nurture the democratic

spirit of the eighteenth century, even after the more sober and scientific labours of Adrien de Valois, and especially of Fréret,[1] had discredited many of its naive, but imaginary assertions.

While Hotman subjects the dominant absolutism to historical criticism, the author of the "Vindiciæ contra Tyrannos,"[2] published in 1579, undertakes to show the right and the duty of resistance to it. He adopted the pseudonym of Junius Brutus, and conjecture has identified him with Hotman, Beza, Du Plessis-Mornay, and Hubert Languet. The last mentioned is now generally credited with its authorship. Hotman had demonstrated the sovereignty of the people from French history. Languet asserts it as a right, and seeks to prove it on both religious and political grounds. In order to establish it he posits the following questions:—Are subjects bound to obey a king who commands what is contrary to the law of God? If not, may they resist such a king? Thirdly, may they resist a king who oppresses the State? Finally, may they call in the aid of neighbouring princes for their deliverance from an irreligious and tyrannical sovereign? He appeals to Scripture for an answer to the first two, and in so doing, views the subject from the theological standpoint, in his relation to God and revealed religion. For the answer to the third he appeals to history and reason as well as Scripture, and views the subject from the purely political standpoint. In treating all three he uses the inductive method, reasoning by the aid of the facts of Scripture and history to general conclusions, and he claims for his doctrines the warrant of logic as well as history, sacred and profane. I am not concerned here to dispute or approve these doctrines. As in the case of Hotman, his ideas are for us the main thing, inasmuch as they are the ideas of the party he represents.

Question one: Are subjects bound to obey a king who commands what is contrary to the law of God? Our author unhesitatingly answers in the negative. Yet the question is not so superfluous as may appear, since many in these days of Christian princes, who claim unlimited power, and are deemed by their flatterers gods on

[1] Fréret read his dissertation to the Academie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres in 1714. He was thrown into the Bastille by a suspicious government for his pains; see Thierry, Considerations sur l'Histoire de France, Récits des Temps Merovingiens, i. 39-43.

[2] It was translated into French by François Estienne in 1581 under the title "De la Puissance Légitime du Prince sur le Peuple," and into English in 1689. The date is significant in view of the *rôle* played by the doctrine of the contract in the English Revolution. It is also interesting to note that the Vindiciæ was published in the same year as Buchanan's De Jure Regni apud Scotos.

earth, are led by fear and constraint to believe that they should be obeyed in all things. Sovereignty over the conscience belongs to God alone. This sovereignty princes calling themselves Christians have usurped, and deem those who refuse to recognise this usurpation rebels. In this sense Christ and the apostles were rebels, and the flatterers of kings still teach them to overlook the distinction between God and Cæsar. But what saith Scripture? Scripture teaches that kings derive their authority from God, are His delegates or lieutenants, and that their power is limited by Him. He alone is absolute sovereign, and has never consented to share His absolute sovereignty with any mortal. Kings are His vassals, not the sharers of His sovereign power, and, as vassals, are invested with their jurisdiction on certain conditions. They are kings by covenant or contract, and this covenant or contract is, according to Scripture, which our author quotes incessantly, twofold; first between God and the king and the people, secondly, between the people and the king. By the first, to which he limits consideration in the meantime, the people and the king undertake to obey and serve God, and are subject to punishment in case of contravention, as when the people made a covenant with Baal, and Saul declined from his obligations to serve Him. Even pagan kings have not escaped punishment for usurping the sovereign power reserved by God to Himself. And what holds of Jewish and even of pagan kings, holds of Christian princes who command what is contrary to God's law. They are on the same footing with rebellious vassals, and if so, who so mad as to deny that we should obey the sovereign Lord, rather than the rebellious vassal? All who refuse this obedience are rebels, as much rebels as those who join a vassal in insurrection against his overlord.

Question two: May subjects resist a king who commands what is contrary to the law of God, and if so, by whom, how, and to what extent is resistance lawful? Once more, what saith Scripture? The covenant or contract is not merely between God and the king, but between God, the king, and the people. The people was a party to the transaction, it had authority to promise and keep promise; if not, the transaction would not have been a contract. Its participation, on the other hand, served to strengthen the contract, just as two or more warranters afford more security for the payment of a debt than one. The king and the people are bound to God for each other. *Ergo*, if the king forsake God, and the people strive not to win him from the evil of his ways, but connive at his sin, the people is guilty of his sin, and *vice versâ*. Resistance is thus involved in the contract. If the king may resist the people, should

the people forsake God, the people may equally resist the king, if the king forsake God. To make a contract with the people as one of the parties, and yet doom the people to bondage to the king's will is both unscriptural and illogical. There can be no contract with a slave. And God would not punish the people for the sins of the prince, if their negligence, connivance, or stupidity were not punishable according to contract. The people is the guardian of religion as well as the prince, and if the prince takes arms against the people for their adherence to their trust, the people may take arms against the prince.[1]

But is the people not a beast with many heads and liable to many disorders? Were it not insane to give the direction of affairs to an unruly and unbridled multitude? True, but by the people our author understands the constituted representatives of the people, the magistrates, the States-General, whom it has substituted for itself to restrain encroachments on its sovereignty. For the people which establishes the king is superior to the king, and the principal persons of the kingdom may associate together as its representatives in resistance to tyranny. Nay, in the case in which the king persuades the majority to become idolaters, the minority led by the chief men—princes and magistrates—may resist the majority. Such a minority are not rebels, for there is a contract, not only between God and the king and the people, but between the king and the people. By this second contract the people promised obedience only as far as the king ruled them justly, and if the king breaks faith with them, he is the rebel. Where there is no justice there is no commonwealth, and resistance to what is unlawful is no rebellion. It does not, however, pertain to individuals to resist, for the covenant is not with individuals but with the people, and only the people, or those who represent it, are bound to observe its stipulations.

Question three: May subjects resist a prince who oppresses the State? God hath appointed kings, but it is the people who establishes them. Kings hold their sovereignty under God from the people. It is from God, but by the people and for the people that they reign. Let them not imagine that they are of higher race than other men. They are not lords of a flock of sheep or a herd of oxen. This, too, is attested by Scripture. The kingship in Israel was not hereditary, but elective. The Roman kings, too, were elected, and though the elective origin of the kingship has been obscured by hereditary succession in more modern countries, it is still apparent in the fact

[1] To this Huguenot reasoning the Catholics might, of course, have replied that in taking arms against heretics the prince was acting in the cause of God and true religion.

that the heir to the crown is not, properly speaking, king till he has taken the coronation oath at the hands of the representatives of the people, as in Spain, France, England. These are as much kings by election as is the Emperor, or the King of Bohemia. Kings, in a word, are created, not born. If the next heir is unworthy, the people may displace him by some other prince of the blood. The whole body of the people is superior to the king, for it is from the people that he derives his power. Only Roman tyrants suffered themselves to be called lords. The king is merely the pilot, not the owner of the ship of State. The people is the owner, and therefore the king is its servant, not its lord. Take away the people and where is the king? Like the Rhodesian Colossus, he falls in pieces. And not only the king, but all the officers of government derive their powers from the same source, which axioms are proved by the history of Judea, Egypt, Sparta, Rome, France, England, Scotland, Germany, Poland. But is the legitimate power of the king less because it is limited by the people? Certainly not. Only usurpers and their flatterers will believe so. Is a man less healthful because he is surrounded by discreet physicians, who counsel him to avoid what is hurtful? Similarly they are the king's best friends who care most for the commonwealth. Remember the words of King Theopompus of Sparta. The more the people watch over the State, the better for both king and State. Unhappily what is every man's business is no man's business, and the people has neglected, with sad results to itself, its sovereign functions. Yet no usurpation can prejudice its right, or alienate liberty. Kings die, but the commonwealth is immortal. Its rights never die, and no modern king can claim more than his ancestors obtained. If he does, he is a thief, and if the peers and chief officers of the kingdom have granted more, their action is treason to the people and does not justify tyranny, or legitimate the loss of liberty. A conspiracy of the magistrates to subject the people is as indefensible as the betrayal by a perfidious advocate of the interests of his client. There is one prescription which carries it above all others, viz., that the people be maintained in the enjoyment of their property and their liberty. Liberty is the privilege of nature, and no people would ever establish a king to rob it of this privilege. Kings were established to maintain justice, defend the State, and protect its members from outrage. The kingship is not an honour but a duty, a burden which consists in protecting the poor from the rich, and the nation from foreign enemies. This is the true secret of its origin, and all kings who pursue their own ends, not the interests of the people, are tyrants. It follows from this that the king is not above the law, but

merely its administrator, and subject to it like the rest. To place the king above the law is to place a premium on human passions. Law is as necessary for a king as for a people. Beware of those court marmousites who make gods of kings, and bow down to their oracles, nay, will have it that justice is nothing in itself, but only what the king ordains. They forget that the king receives the laws as well as the crown from the people. He may not even make a new law without their consent and the co-operation of the Estates. He has not the power of life and death over his subjects as a master over his slaves, he may only with the advice of sage lawyers exercise the right of pardon in certain cases.

Other axioms need only be stated to be understood, though our author dips deep in his historic lore in order to elucidate them. The property of the people does not belong to the king, nor is the king the owner of the kingdom. Such is a tyrant, not a king, and a tyrant is one who comes into possession by violence, or governs not according to law, and thus breaks the contract. The first is a tyrant without title, the second a tyrant by practice. The law of nature, the law of nations, the civil law empower all to resist a tyrant without title, who is simply a robber, and the meanest person in the commonwealth may put the robber to death. Only if he acquire the right of possession, and the people acquiesce in this right, is he to be regarded as having established a title, and the people must then submit to his rule. In the case of tyrants by practice, more circumspection is necessary. Even if a king do not conform exactly to the laws, he is not to be forthwith proclaimed a tyrant. Absolutely perfect kings do not exist, and the subjects may account themselves happy if their kings are indifferently good. But if he purposely ruin the commonwealth, if he pervert the laws, if he break contracts and proscribe his subjects, he is a tyrant and an enemy of both God and man. The more he is tolerated, the more intolerable does he become. The people through its representatives should first remonstrate and use persuasive means in order to turn him from his evil course; if persuasion fail, they ought to use force, and pursue him as a rebel against the sovereignty of the people. If a General Council may depose the Pope, who claims to be king of kings, for his sins, much more may the States-General depose a king for his tyranny. And if the majority of the States-General concur in the royal tyranny, the true patriots in its ranks are entitled to save the commonwealth in spite of them.

Question four: May subjects call in the aid of foreign sovereigns for their deliverance from the irreligion or tyranny of the prince?

Princes are ready enough to act on the principle of intervention for their political interests. Are they also entitled to intervene on religious and moral grounds? Certainly. The Church being one and universal, the protection of the Church is the duty of all Christian princes. Humanity, too, demands intervention. Virtue, as Cicero says, being the mother of mankind, enjoins every man to seek the good of the whole. Foreign princes may not, however, invade the territories of an irreligious tyrant for purposes of conquest, and by this reservation the author saves his patriotism on paper at least.

We can well understand the sensational effect of this work. It systematised the political ideas of the Huguenots with great logical power and no little lore. It was at once an apology, a defence, and an attack. Hotman had sought to attain the same end by indirect means, by a historical rather than a logical exposition of the doctrine of the sovereignty of the people. Languet shoots straight at the target. He argues, demonstrates, dogmatises direct from reason, Scripture, and history, lays bare in the sight of king and people the fiction, the iniquity of absolute rule. He has made use of the "Franco-Gallia," but he goes beyond it, beyond the history of ancient Gaul and Germany to the Jewish theocracy, and even at times beyond this to human nature, the basis of human right. His doctrine of the contract is especially noteworthy. In this respect he is the father of Locke and Rousseau. He emphasises all through the sovereignty of the people based on this contract, and the subordination of the king to the people. With that sovereignty is bound the right of Protestantism not only to existence, but to supremacy. In this respect he is intolerant and extreme, but he is at least logical from the Protestant standpoint, and the stress of the times may be allowed to mitigate his fierce logic. He is face to face with the enemy, and if he does not demolish the enemy, the enemy will demolish him. Though democratic in principle, he is, like Hotman, not revolutionary. His book is an appeal to ancient right on grounds of reason and Scripture, and like Hotman he would reform the State by its constitutional institutions. He is not anti-monarchic and republican, for he is careful to distinguish between good and bad kings, and even hazards the assertion that a good king represents in some sort the Divine Majesty. Yet the work teems with revolutionary dogmas, and it might, in part at least, equally with the "Contrat Social," have served as the handbook of the revolutionists of 1789, for it is an exposure of a vast usurpation by convention and self-interest, and a call to return to the original contract. Only,

with Languet the contract is theocratic, with Rousseau the contract will be purely democratic.

Languet and Hotman are Protestant champions. Yet they, or rather their doctrines, played into the hands of the Catholic League. The Leaguists borrowed their doctrines, and gave them an application suitable to themselves. The political tenets of the League afford a strange demonstration how the same premises may be twisted to support diametrically opposite conclusions. According to Languet, the prince may be resisted, because he resists Protestantism; according to the League theorists, he may be resisted because he truckles to it. Languet posits the sovereignty of the people in order to condemn a persecuting Catholic king (Catholicism being idolatry). The Leaguists borrow from him the same doctrine, in order to condemn and depose a king who is supposed to be a traitor to Catholicism and a patron of heresy (Protestantism being damnable error). Languet exalts the power of the States-General as against an absolute king in order to dethrone both king and Pope; the Leaguists in order to establish the papal supremacy. The one appeals from the king to the absolute Lord of conscience (a noble appeal) in defence of the new creed; the other makes the same appeal in defence of the right to coerce its adherents. Strange medley of contradictory applications of the same principles, yet it does not occur to the zealots of either side whether it is not possible to tolerate each other, in deference to that Lord of conscience whom both invoke and whose will both misinterpret. The sovereignty of the people, founded on a narrow theocracy, becomes itself in such minds a tyranny, and in resisting this tyranny, whether Protestant or Catholic, even the absolute king may be the vindicator of true liberty. This bandying of principles was certainly not edifying. It shocked Montaigne, who can only describe it as "terrible impudence."

We are already acquainted with the political programme of the League. If the reader will turn to the work of Dr Jean Boucher,[1] he will find its political theory, of which that programme was in part the practical expression. Dr Jean Boucher was no doubt a most respectable parish priest, but he is a poor political philosopher, a mere compiler, in fact, though his compilation is instinct with his own fanatic spirit. His philosophy is a philosophy of shreds and patches, and need not detain us long, would not detain us at all, if he were not the mouthpiece of a political party. He is far inferior to the philosophic theorists of his Church, like Suarez and Bellarmin, who,

[1] De Justa Henrici III. Abdicatione (1591).

however, are mere scholastic divines, and have little or no influence outside the pale of academic discussion. According to Dr Jean Boucher, then, the Pope is king of kings, the successor of Gregory VII., who has the right to loose subjects from obedience to unworthy kings. For Jean Boucher the Renascence exists not. He is a benighted monk of the Middle Ages, for whom there is no progress, no liberty outside the Church and its Pope. Further, and this is taken from Languet, his mortal enemy, the sovereignty resides in the people. God is the source, but the people is the donor of the royal power, and has not abdicated its sovereignty in favour of the king. There is a contract, and the contract subsists. The people is its guardian, and in the case of religious defection on the part of the king, the people has the right and the obligation to resist. Finally, the tyrant may be put to death, and according to the nature and degree of his tyranny, the power of putting him to death rests with the public authority, or with the individual. A tyrant who conquers a people may be put to death by a private person; a tyrant who becomes such by abusing legitimate authority against individuals, by the public authority; a tyrant who does so against the State, by either the one or the other. It remained for the Spanish Jesuit, Mariana, to go a step further and kill the tyrant by any means without distinction of the character of his tyranny, and give the divine blessing to the assassin, as Boucher does in the case of Jacques Clément.

In the writings of both Protestants and Leaguists the combative spirit is at boiling point. The Protestant not only contends for toleration, he challenges his opponent to mortal combat. To suffer Catholicism is to incur the guilt of conniving at idolatry. The Leaguist is still more aggressive and intolerant, since he represents the large majority, perhaps twelve to one, and this majority is unenlightened and fiercely conservative. Outside the Church there is no salvation, not even existence. Accept the Pope, the saints, the mass, the whole body of mediæval tradition and superstition, or die and go to perdition, is the only alternative. Both are irreconcilable enemies, both are persecutors, but the stigma of persecution applies far more to the Leaguist than to the Protestant. Happily, however, in France the Protestant had not the chance of exemplifying his principles; to him was usually reserved the glory of being the martyr for his faith. Nor should it be forgotten that if the Protestant turned persecutor, he did so in antagonism to the root principle of Protestantism—liberty of conscience and a certain amount of intellectual independence. Unhappily for the reputation

of his opponent, the Catholic had the power as well as the will to persecute.

Between them stood the Politiques, who contended that the majority is not always right, the minority not always wrong, and recognised the necessity of acting on this principle in the circumstances. It was the party of expediency, yet it was the party of the highest principle, because in this world of ignorant prejudice and mental limitation, men cannot agree on the truth in religion, politics, philosophy, and should therefore agree to differ rather than fly at each other's throats. This party embraced adherents of both creeds, the moderate Catholics and the moderate Protestants, few but select, and important, because of their character and their intelligence, important, too, because they were the men of the future. Both Leaguist and Protestant invoke the aid of the State in maintaining their tenets, both believe in the theocracy, to both a government that will not enforce their nostrums is the enemy of God. The Politiques, on the other hand, separate conscience from creed, at least the public creed, and hold that the business of the government is to rule the State and not the conscience. Its exponents were Michel L'Hôpital, La Noue, and Jean Bodin. It was a strange fatuity that associated two such diametrically opposite characters as Catherine de Medici and Michel de L'Hôpital in the government of a great State. L'Hôpital is the philosopher in office, a brilliant example of character, intelligence, moral elevation, applied to the duties of political office, at a time when these were at so low an ebb in political life. He lives in a region far above the chaos of contending fanatics,—champions of orthodoxy, champions of heterodoxy, theologians, jurists who are quasi-theologians, obscurantist monks, party politicians, zealots of reform, zealots of tradition. With L'Hôpital in the "Traité de la Reformation de la Justice," we live in the abstract, and yet it is the abstract applied to the real, the abstractions of the practical statesman, which are usually illusions to all but himself and the select few like himself. For L'Hôpital, reason is the great fact in the world. It is universal, and laws are its expressions, more or less varied according to race and circumstances. Force should only be the servant of reason, "all other force is bestial, reprobate, condemned of God and man." The prince who would wield absolute power over the subject is included in this condemnation. The power of the prince is based on justice, and force should only be the instrument of justice. To violate the conscience is to violate justice, and therefore the prince must accord liberty of conscience, refrain from becoming the

aggressive champion of one cult by proscribing its rivals, and protect all from persecution. Moreover, mildness will always achieve more than rigour. In the attempt to realise these principles L'Hôpital failed, for Machiavelli, not L'Hôpital, was the true mentor of Catherine de Medici, and the spirit of party was too strong for the legislator who was a practical moral philosopher. His spirit sank under the shock of the Massacre of St Bartholomew, which he only survived a year. In his retirement he had recourse to his pen, that potent instrument of great statesmen out of office, in order to win adherents for his gospel of toleration, founded on reason.[1] Peace he contended, is the result of compromise, or victory. To conquer the Huguenots is impossible, or very difficult. You must either exterminate, or tolerate them. The attempt to exterminate them would mean the endless protraction of civil war. But the wise physician seeks to heal the body, by gentle, not by violent means, and the malady of the State can only be healed by justice and moderation. Though not a Protestant, he sympathised with the determination of the Huguenots to defend themselves from oppression. By compromising, the king will not suffer in his dignity even if compelled to yield to those who have taken arms in self-defence, and the king is not justified in pushing his rights to the length of doing harm to the welfare of the State. His will, his right is not arbitrary. And can that be called a capitulation which grants liberty of conscience, in other words, eschews the *régime* of force for that of reason?

The Protestant La Noue[2] is, like the Catholic L'Hôpital, the friend of civil order based on toleration. For him, too, the worst enemy of both religion and civil order is the intolerant fanatic. Civil war renders men brutal and irreligious. Let them learn the feasibility of toleration from ancient Rome and modern Switzerland. Let them reform their lives and cease persecution. Charity is above creed, and those who persecute belie Christ who suffered both the Samaritans, who were idolaters, and the Sadducees, who denied the immortality of the soul. All men are your neighbours whatever their creed, and ought to be treated as such. Leave off abusing the word heretic, which is but the pretext of your own prejudice. Make war on your own sins. You will have enough to do without troubling yourselves about those of other men. This is both common-sense and true religion. It is also an anticipation of John Locke.

The ideas of L'Hôpital and La Noue were also the ideas of Étienne

[1] But de la Guerre et de la Paix (1570).
[2] Discours Politiques et Militaires (1587).

Pasquier, the famous jurist,[1] and Pierre Pithou, one of the authors of the "Satyre Ménippée," both Catholics, and of the Protestants Du Plessis-Mornay and De Thou. They were the ideas of a still more celebrated man, who is the theorist of the Politiques, Jean Bodin, author of "La Republique," the greatest political philosopher, with the exception of Machiavelli perhaps, in the long interval between Aristotle and Vico and Montesquieu. Bodin, after studying law at Toulouse, settled in 1561, at the age of thirty, as an advocate at Paris. He did not excel as a pleader, and gave himself to those studies in constitutional history and political philosophy whose fruits he has left in his "Methodus" and "Republique."[2] His literary reputation, coupled with the favour of Henry III., brought him promotion. In the same year in which the "Republique" was published, he became royal procurator at Laon, and deputy for the Vermandois to the States-General at Blois. In the critical discussions of this Assembly Bodin took a memorable part as the advocate of compromise and toleration, as the defender of the constitution of the Estates against the proposal to commit its powers to a small committee of the orders, and as the incorruptible opponent of the motion to alienate a portion of the royal domain to defray the expenses of the proposed campaign against the Huguenots.[3] The temporary success of his efforts cost him the favour of the monarch. Bodin drew nearer to the Duke of Anjou, whom he accompanied on his journey to England. His fame had preceded him, and the author of the "Republique," which was already read and commented at Cambridge, was admitted to the court of Elizabeth. After Anjou's death he retired to Laon, where he shortly after succeeded his father-in-law as procurator-general. His resentment against Henry III. led him, very inconsistently, to profess adhesion to the League. This aberration from principle brought its own punishment in the embarrassments of a liberal-minded man, who strove in vain to moderate the excesses of the party with which he had temporarily allied himself, and in the persecution with which the zealots of the League assailed him. He was denounced as a heretic and a sorcerer, and his book on Demonology shows that, with all his learning and rationalism, he was exceedingly credulous in the matter of witches and demons. He atoned for this temporary defection from

[1] Recherches sur la France (1561).

[2] Les six Livres de la Republique de Jean Bodin (1576). He wrote it first in French and afterwards translated it into Latin.

[3] For an account of these proceedings, see Baudrillart, Bodin et son Temps, 117-127.

the principles of moderation, which he had championed in his writings and in the States-General, by espousing the cause of Henry IV. towards the end of 1593, and he had the happiness to witness the triumph of that cause—the cause of the Politiques—before his death in 1596.

The fact that the "Republique" was written in the midst of the struggle which threatened the subversion of the State, explains its main characteristic as a pre-eminently able and erudite attempt to vindicate the monarchy. Like L'Hôpital and La Noue, Bodin is emphatically a monarchist, because it is necessary to support the monarchy against faction in the interest both of the State and the nation. "Seeing that a violent storm," he explains in his preface, "has tormented the vessel of our republic with such fury that the captain and the pilots have become wearied and exhausted by continual exertion, it is necessary that the passengers should lend a hand, some to the sails, some to the ropes, some to the anchor, and that those who are wanting in strength should at least give good advice and present their vows and prayers to Him who can command the winds and appease the tempest, for all are in the same danger. Therefore it is that I, being able to render no other service, have undertaken to discourse of the republic in the popular language, in order to be understood by all France." He aims at a higher *rôle* than that of the pamphleteering partisan of his time. He seeks to construct a system of political philosophy which may merit the name of science, by investigating and comparing the various constitutions of history, and portraying the ideas of law and justice underlying all forms of government. For us the interest of the "Republic" lies in the fact that it starts and discusses many questions of permanent importance, besides the burning questions of the hour—questions which suggest the eighteenth rather than the sixteenth century,

Both as practical politician and political philosopher his ideal governor is a highly moral person in contrast to that of Machiavelli, whom he judges very severely. Injustice in a prince is inadmissible. It may rightly cost him his crown. "The sacred laws of nature demand that the sceptre should be torn from the hands of the wicked in order to be conferred on good and virtuous princes." God is their judge. History shows that He is also the avenger of wrong. But he holds anarchy in equal horror with tyranny, and professes his detestation of the factious politicians of his time who foment rebellion, and thus give scope to the worst of all tyrannies.

What is the State, or the republic, according to Bodin? It is

the right government, *i.e.*, government in accordance with the laws of justice, of several families, and of that which is common to them, and includes the exercise of sovereign power.[1] The foundation of the State is the family, which appears to Bodin, in contrast to Aristotle, as a mirror of the greater organisation. The family is a distinct organisation in the State, and though the republic is composed of a union of families under a sovereign, this union does not abolish the family tie. We must not forget the difference between what is common and what is individual in the State. The republic is not founded on communism. It does not legitimate the common enjoyment of women, or of property. The State must recognise the difference between what is common and what is individual. If not, there can be neither commonwealth nor family. Instead of the friendship of citizenship, the affection of the family, communism is fitted to nurture hatred and perpetual quarrels, as in the case of the Anabaptists. Property and family affection are for Bodin, as for Aristotle, whom he closely follows, of the highest ethical and political value. A thorough-going communism is impossible, and has never been illustrated in history. Even the Münster Anabaptists reserve women and vestments from the common use. In every well regulated republic private interest is compatible with, and necessary to the commonweal, and should only be limited by the laws.

The government of the family belongs to the husband; the wife is a subject, rather than a partner. The paternal authority is exaggerated as much as the marital, to the extent even of attributing to the father the power of life and death over the child, but while he emphasises the duty of respect for parents and practically makes the child the slave of the father, he condemns slavery as alike contrary to nature and utility, as both unjust and dangerous. He demands emancipation, and in this respect anticipates the modern view of human rights.

The republic, based on the family which remains intact, is constituted by the union of families. When the heads of these families become citizens, when they agree, or are forced to submit themselves to a sovereign power, the republic is established. What, now, is the nature of this sovereignty? "The sovereignty," answers Bodin, "is the absolute and perfect power of a republic."[2] Specially noteworthy is the distinction between sovereignty and government[3]—a distinction which Bodin is careful to make nearly two hundred years before Rousseau. The sovereignty is permanent, the government may be temporary. If the sovereignty is permanent, is it not

[1] Republique, p. 1. [2] *Ibid.*, 85. [3] *Ibid.*, 189.

inalienable? Is it not perpetually resident in the body of the people? Bodin hesitates to draw the conclusion so inimical to absolute monarchy which Rousseau will emphasise with such relentless logic. The people, or the nobles, he interjects, may confer the sovereignty on some one, as a proprietor may give away his property, without other cause than his own free will, and without conditions. The possession of the sovereignty cannot indeed be shackled by any conditions. Otherwise it could not be sovereignty. On the absolute character of the sovereignty, Bodin is thus the father of Hobbes and Rousseau, and uses almost identical language. "The sovereign cannot tie his own hands." "The sovereign is not bound by his own laws." The only difference is as to who is the depositary of the sovereignty. The people is, and can alone be sovereign, according to Rousseau. The sovereignty is inalienable, and cannot even be delegated. According to Bodin, and Hobbes after him, the sovereignty may be alienated, and may, in the case of an absolute monarch, reside in the person who has received it as a free and unconditional gift from the people. In other words, Bodin holds that the people may renounce the right of making laws or controlling administration to the sovereign, who is neither accountable to the people nor bound by the law.

If the sovereignty is alienable, is it not divisible? If the people may agree to abdicate the sovereignty, may it not agree to divide it, to confer it not on one individual but to share it between different orders in the State? No, answers Bodin. The sovereignty may be conferred on a monarch; it may reside in an aristocracy, or a democracy; it cannot be shared by all three. It cannot be supreme, if it is not simple, if it does not reside in a single power to which the citizens must be subject. Subjection is absolutely necessary in the State; it is, indeed, the essential of the State. The State only exists because the people has agreed to be subject. In following out his theory, Bodin denies the assertion of contemporary pamphleteers that the sovereignty in France is invested in the three orders of royalty, aristocracy, and democracy, in the form of monarchy, Parliaments, and States-General. "They are guilty of the crime of *lèse majesté*, who make the subjects the partners of the sovereign power." Such a republic never existed, even in theory, for Plato's ideal republic is, according to Bodin, in the last resort a democratic state. Moreover, to divide the sovereignty between monarchy, aristocracy, democracy, is to give rise to a conflict which can only end in the supremacy of one of the participators. Mixed States are reducible to one or other of these as far as the exercise of

the sovereignty is concerned. While the form of the State may vary, the sovereignty must remain simple.

Proceeding to consider each of these forms in detail, he defines the monarchy as "a republic in which the absolute sovereignty resides in a prince,"[1] and classifies the various kinds of monarchy under three heads, royal, seigneurial, and tyrannic.[2] Royal or legitimate monarchy is "that in which the subjects obey the laws of the monarch, and the monarch the laws of nature, and in which the subjects enjoy their natural liberties and the rights of property."[3] This is the monarchy to which he gives the preference. It is a monarchy unlimited by the laws of the State, and yet limited by the natural rights of man. It is not the absolute monarchy of the seventeenth century, of Hobbes or other champions of the divine right of kings, though in practice it may amount to the same thing. The king is independent of the laws, yet he is bound to observe them by the law of God and the law of nature. The monarchy is unlimited, but it must be legitimate. The monarch is not the universal proprietor. He must respect property, for it is not to be assumed that the sovereignty has been conferred for the purpose of despoiling the subject. The laws cannot, however, compel him to do so if he is otherwise minded, and there is no guarantee of property unless the subject may defend it on the ground of natural right. The weakness of this kind of reasoning is patent. Moral obligation is a poor species of constraint to apply to an unscrupulous king, while the back-door of defence on the ground of natural right would simply involve the State in anarchy. Bodin has, however, great faith in his legitimate absolute king, in spite of the experiences of his own age. "The law of the prince is necessarily made on the model of the law of God." And this prince is, in the author's theory, a person exalted by every virtue that a good ruler should exemplify. "It is the true feature of a royal monarchy that the prince render himself as clement, and as amenable to the laws of nature as he desires his subjects to be obedient to him. He does so when he fears God, when he shows pity to the afflicted, and is prudent in his enterprises, bold in what he undertakes, modest in prosperity, content in adversity, true to his word, wise in his council, careful of his subjects, ready to aid his allies, terrible to his enemies, courteous towards men of quality, a terror to the evil-doer, and just towards all. If therefore the subjects obey the laws of the king, and the king those of nature, the law on the part of both will be mistress, or, as Pindar hath it, queen."[4] Moreover, the legitimate monarch is not necessarily hereditary,

[1] Republique, 188. [2] *Ibid.*, 189. [3] *Ibid.*, 194. [4] *Ibid.*, 195.

though Bodin prefers hereditary succession. The prince is not born legitimate, he must become so by his good government. Justice is the grand test of legitimacy. This reasoning is very high-toned. There is one little drawback which has, apparently, escaped our author's attention. History has not proved it conclusive.

The seigneurial monarchy is defined as "that in which the prince becomes lord of both the property and the person of the subject by right of arms, and governs his subjects as the father of a family does his slaves."[1] This is the primitive form of monarchy, conquest, not election, being, he thinks, the first origin of kings. It is the form that prevailed among the Assyrians, Medes, Persians, Egyptians, and Ethiopians. The durability of this kind of monarchy is an argument in its favour in his eyes. For the third kind, the tyrannic monarchy, he evinces the utmost detestation. "A monarchic tyranny is that in which the monarch, despising the laws of nature, abuses the persons of free men as slaves, and the goods of his subjects as his own."[2] Severity, however, is not necessarily a mark of tyranny, and a monarch may practise harshness towards the rich and powerful of his subjects who oppress the poor, without being a tyrant. The real tyrant, the usurper, who violates the laws of God and nature, is worthy of death.

The aristocratic form of republic is "that in which the least part of the citizens govern the greater by sovereign authority," and thereby contrasts with "the popular or democratic form, in which the majority wields the sovereign power in the name of the whole."[3]

When Bodin descends from the region of theory to that of the practical work of government, he shows a disposition to moderate his definition of monarchic sovereignty on grounds of utility. Sovereignty and government, it must be remembered, are two different things. What is inadmissible in reference to the sovereignty may be admissible and beneficial in reference to government. The most solid monarchy is that which is popularly governed. "Monarchy with popular government is the most assured of all monarchies."[4] Accordingly, he finds a place in his monarchic State for the senate or parliament, which he defines as "the legitimate assembly of the councillors of State, whose office is to give advice to those who exercise the sovereign power in any republic."[5] Such an institution is of eminent utility, and the prince does well to rule by the guidance of a wise senate. To promulgate edicts against its voice is to invite dislike to the laws and disrespect for the magistrates, and finally risk

[1] Republique, 198. [2] *Ibid.*, 200-290. [3] *Ibid.*, 218, 231.
[4] *Ibid.*, 236. [5] *Ibid.*, 238.

rebellion and the subversion of the State. The qualities requisite in the senate are age, experience, judiciousness, integrity, prudence. It ought not to be large, and ought to be impervious to the ambition of individuals and the factiousness of the populace. The States-General and the Provincial Estates found in him a warm champion. Theoretically, the sovereign prince is under no necessity to consult the States-General. Such necessity would infringe his sovereign rights, and in this sense Bodin combats the contention of the Protestant and Catholic democrats that the States-General are supreme in the State and superior to the monarch. In practice, however, he virtually gives away this cardinal reservation, and has to pay the penalty for making exaggerated statements by subsequently qualifying them or explaining them away. The nation, he admits, has the right to be consulted in affairs of State, and vote taxes as a safeguard against corruption and maladministration. Liberty of association ought also to be fostered in the form of trade guilds and corporations as far as it is not inconsistent with the general interests of the State All secret associations are, however, dangerous to public order, and therefore, inadmissible, but religious sects should be tolerated, on the ground that intolerance is impolitic. Persecution only stiffens resistance.

A most interesting section deals with the subject of revolution and with the question of the rise, grandeur, decay, and extinction of empires. A revolution, according to Bodin, is a displacement of the sovereignty, and may be voluntary or necessary, or may combine the elements of both. A necessary revolution may be natural or violent; a voluntary one is the easiest and the gentlest of all. Whatever its character, revolution is in certain cases desirable, because beneficial. Among the causes of revolution are the failure of the succession and the conflict of rival candidates for the sovereignty, the excessive poverty of the greater part of the people and the undue wealth of a few of the citizens, the unequal distribution of offices and honours, the ambition of governments, the retribution of injuries, the oppression of tyrants, the change of laws and religion, the reaction against a voluptuous prince. Monarchies, in his opinion, which he might have changed had he lived three centuries later, are less subject to revolution than democracies or aristocracies. This distinction it owes to the hereditary principle. The greatest danger to monarchic stability lies in the exactions and cruelties of the prince, while the chief menace to popular and aristocratic States is the placing of the military force under the control of one man. He is master of the State who is master of its forces. The popular State is

the most exposed to revolution, and the main cause, in Bodin's eyes, is the spirit of change and the habit of discussion inherent in the people. Discussion is an enemy of stability. It did not occur to him to ask whether it might not be the surest guarantee of order. To let men speak and discuss as they list is still foreign to the genius of the sixteenth century, the Renascence and the Reformation notwithstanding. Democracy still seems identical with sedition. "The true bent of the people is to enjoy full liberty without bridle or restraint whatsoever, and establish equality in goods, honours, etc., without any consideration for nobility, knowledge, or virtue."[1] In an aristocratic State the chance of revolution is less, but such States are especially exposed to the factions of the nobles and the discontent of the people. It is the tendency of a monarchy to change into an aristocracy, and of both popular and aristocratic States to assume a monarchic form. No State, whatever its form, is safe from revolution; no State but in the course of time suffers change, and arrives at length at ruin. Revolutions are, however, preventable. The main thing is to apply the right remedy at the right time, avoiding extreme measures, unless the malady is extreme. Reform is thus vindicated as the grand safeguard of States, but it is reform of a very gradual kind, and takes no account of the legitimate aspirations of an oppressed people, groaning under the burden of convention and oppressive privilege, for a prompt remedy. Bodin has, indeed, like Burke after him, a nervous dread of innovation, and while he admits it in regard to the laws, he only admits it in extreme cases in regard to political institutions. He is extremely cautious, while admitting the fact of progress by reform, and would now be regarded as an ultra conservative. Among the reforms which he advises, are the abolition of the venality of political and magisterial offices, the modification of the right of primogeniture, the diminution of the inequality in State and society. He demands an adequate system of public instruction, equality of taxation, protection, in the form of the augmentation of export dues on provisions, in order to increase the revenue and cheapen food, the increase of import dues in order to encourage manufactures, the reduction as far as possible of direct taxation. Reform to be salutary should learn from experience, and should take account of the differences of constitution and national conditions of the various nations.

To conclude, Bodin is in theory an advocate of absolute monarchy, in practice he prefers a limited monarchy. Religious toleration, combined with political order, monarchic supremacy tempered by the

[1] Republique, 236, 237.

States-General, are his solutions of the political problems of the age. He lived long enough to witness the triumph of monarchy in the victories of Henry IV. He was not spared to welcome the Edict of Nantes. Unfortunately for France, the triumph of the monarchy was not tempered by the limitations which he deemed indispensable to the well-being of the State—the exercise of a certain measure of popular control over the government. While the system vindicated by Henry IV. was to prove a boon in the hands of so enlightened a monarch, its development in those of his successors was to bring back the *régime* of oppression and intolerance, and thus pave the way for a future revolution, both necessary and violent.

SOURCES OF THIS CHAPTER.—Hotman, Franco-Gallia; Life of François Hotman by M. Dareste in the Revue Historique, t. i.; Vindiciæ contra Tyrannos, attributed to Hubert Languet; Jean Boucher, De Justa Henrici III. Abdicatione; L'Hôpital, Traité de la Reformation de la Justice and But de la Guerre et de la Paix; La Noue, Discours Politiques et Militaires; Étienne Pasquier, Recherches sur la France; Jean Bodin, Les six Livres de la Republique; Baudrillart, Bodin et son Temps.

## CHAPTER IX.

### HENRY IV. AND SULLY—REGENERATION OF THE MONARCHY (1589-1610).

"MY brother," said the dying Henry III. to the King of Navarre, "I have commanded all the officers of the Crown to acknowledge you king after my death. But be sure of this, you will never reign unless you become a Catholic." Henry III. spoke truly. A Huguenot King of France was an impossibility. Even the moderate Catholics would not have submitted to this, while ready to welcome the accession of Henry, if he would consent to profess the religion of the vast majority. The Leaguists, on the other hand, would not have him on any terms. They clave to Cardinal Bourbon, the creature of the Guises, and, failing him, they could choose between the Duke of Lorraine and Philip II.

As to the Huguenots, they were ready to support Henry, even at the price of abjuration, if they were assured of toleration. Happily for France, Henry IV. was prepared both to abjure and to tolerate, and thus rally the moderate Catholics and the Huguenots to his cause. He was not a man of deep religious convictions. He had never been a stiff-necked Huguenot; he had no sympathy with Huguenot or Catholic bigotry, and it is only a fond credulity that could read into his character at this period profound religious aspirations of any kind. The fact seems to be that, at this critical juncture, he looked at the question of religion from the political standpoint,[1] from the standpoint of the necessities of the situation. Barring his religion, he was legitimate king, for the claims of Lorraine and of Philip II., even if they had been seriously entertained, were frustrated by the Salic Law, and though Cardinal Bourbon had the

[1] Writing of Henry's conversion, Madame de Mornay asserts that it was all a matter of political expediency. "La resolution en estoit prise sur les considerations humaines, sans consulter les Escritures divines, et l'evesques n'y furent appelez que pour donner quelque forme et ceremonie a ceste prestendue conversion" (Mémoires de Madame de Mornay, edited for the Société de l'Histoire de France, by Madame de Witt, i. 263).

support of the League, he was too contemptible a candidate to satisfy any but the extreme zealots. The Duke of Mayenne and his nephew, the young Duke of Guise, were mere adventurers who sought to use religious passions for their own ends. Against them all, Henry could urge the plea of legitimacy. What was of greater importance, the welfare of France was bound up with the recognition of his claim, and it was clearly his duty to subordinate his private views, in a question of national concern, to the public interest. A man of profound religious convictions might have preferred to sacrifice his crown to his conscience. To a man of the stamp of Henry IV., conscience was amenable to reason, and in view of the fact that religious conviction had been overdone and had entailed such baneful consequences to France these thirty years, to temper conscience by reason might not seem an unworthy part to play even in a man of high spirit and perfectly honourable motives. And such a man now appeared on the scene. Personally, Henry had more akin to the Politiques than to the Huguenots, if he had more in common with the Huguenots than with the violent Catholics, and the policy of the Politiques was now to find its successful vindication. However distasteful to the uncompromising spirits on either side, it is certain that after thirty years of civil war, this policy was the only possible one. It might not be heroic to renounce his creed for a crown, but what would have been inconsistency and weakness in a Philip II., was prudence and patriotism in a Henry IV. The man was eminently suited to his *rôle*. To reassure the moderate Catholics, he undertook to maintain the old creed without innovation in all places where it was professed, to receive instruction in its tenets by a council to be convened within six months, to confer the government of all conquered towns on Catholics, with the exception of those ceded to the Huguenots, and to convoke the States-General.[1] He thus refused to capitulate forthwith. He would conserve his independence and yield only to persuasion, though the result might be a foregone conclusion. "What," he asked, "would the most devoted adherents of the Catholic religion say, if after having lived thirty years in one faith, they should suddenly see me change my creed, in the hope of gaining a kingdom, . . . after having been nurtured and instructed in one profession, throw myself all of a sudden on the other side, without a single word of discussion? No, gentlemen, never shall the King of Navarre act thus, were there even thirty crowns to be gained by it. . . . Instruct me; I am not at all obstinate. For if you show me another truth than that which I

[1] Isambert, xv. 3-5.

hold, I shall surrender."[1] In other words, he was willing to listen to argument, but would on no account yield to compulsion, or lay himself open to the reproach of acting from motives of self-interest. Nay, if the more bigoted Catholics would not listen to reason and risk the arbitration of the sword, he would oppose the sword with the sword until his opponents were willing, like him, to submit to the arbitration of reason. In no case would he consent to sacrifice his co-religionists, and buy terms at the price of persecution.

By coalescing the moderate Catholics and the Huguenots, he secured at the outset a vantage ground from which to crush the League. His prudence, energy, military genius did the rest. I shall not linger to portray that struggle, which is known as the ninth civil war, but which was really the continuation of the conflict begun in 1585. It was both bitter and protracted, for Henry had to fight Philip II. as well as the Duke of Mayenne, the Leaguist leader. Against the Spanish-Leaguist combination, he could, however, pit the co-operation of England, Holland, and Protestant Germany, and his generalship, which was brilliantly exemplified by the victories of Arques (21st September 1589) and Ivry (14th March 1590) was incomparably superior to that of all the Leaguist leaders, except Parma. Progress was, nevertheless, slow. Three times he was forced to raise the siege of Paris, which endured the worst horrors of famine rather than treat with a heretic king. There was only one means of overcoming this stubborn resistance and outwitting the ambitious schemes of Philip,[2] and the masterly strategy of his great general. It was to conclude his negotiations with Pope Clement VIII. and his conferences with the bishops by declaring his adhesion to the doctrines of the Catholic Church and publicly attending mass at St Denis on the 25th July 1593.[3] In the following February he was crowned at Chartres, without waiting for the papal absolution. The obligation to exterminate the heretics, which formed part of the coronation oath,[4] was embarrassing, but the Edict of Nantes was to show that this "conversion" had not made a bigot of Henry IV.

[1] Lettres Missives de Henri IV., edited for the Documents Inédits by M. Berger de Xivrey, i. 448.

[2] Philip laboured hard through his ambassador the Duke of Feria to bring the Leaguist States-General, which met at Paris in January 1593, to confer the crown on the Infanta, who was to marry the Duke of Guise. See Procès-Verbaux des États Généraux de 1593, edited for the Documents Inédits by M. Auguste Bernard.

[3] For the conferences with the Archbishop of Bourges and other prelates, see Isambert, xv. 50-71; for Henry's profession of faith, see *ibid.*, xv. 72, 73.

[4] Isambert, xv. 76.

While it was no menace of persecution to the Huguenots, it proved the undoing of the League. City after city came over; leader after leader,—Villeroy, Vitry, and Villars first of the number,[1]—followed suit. There was defection in Paris itself, which Mayenne and Guise quitted in March 1594, and at length, on the 22nd of that month, Henry entered his capital in triumph. Before the end of the year Guise submitted, and was appointed governor of Provence in order to checkmate the Duke of Épernon. In the beginning of 1595 the League received another mortal stroke in the banishment of the Jesuits, consequent on the attempt of Jean Chatel, a pupil of the order, on the king's life.[2] Almost simultaneously came the formal declaration of war[3] against Philip, its patron and active ally. In September the Pope formally absolved Henry, and in the following January the League lost its leader in the defection of Mayenne,[4] whose relations with Philip had become strained. His submission paved the way for that of the Dukes of Joyeuse, Nemours, and Épernon. There only remained the Duke of Mercœur, who maintained an obstinate warfare in Brittany, and Mercœur was at last obliged to accept terms in March 1598.[5] Two months later, the conflict which had developed into an international struggle with Spain, in conjunction with England and Holland, was terminated by the Peace of Vervins,[6] and the restoration to France of all places in Spanish hands.

Henry did not overlook the interests of his old co-religionists in the hour of triumph. A few weeks before the conclusion of the Treaty of Vervins, he settled the terms of religious peace in France on the basis of the Edict of Nantes. It was no temporary compromise, meant to cover the insincerity of the government, as so many of these religious edicts had proved to be. The Edict of Nantes guaranteed liberty of conscience throughout the kingdom to the Huguenots as "a perpetual and irrevocable ordinance,"[7] and liberty

[1] De Meaux, Luttes Religieuses, 244-249.

[2] Isambert, xv. 93 (7th January 1595).

[3] *Ibid.*, xv. 94 (16th January 1595).

[4] *Ibid.*, xv. 104-116. [5] *Ibid.*, xv. 169. *Ibid.*, xv. 210, 211.

[6] "Cest edict perpétuel et irrévocable" (Isambert, xv. 172). Liberty of conscience is stated in decisive terms—"Et pour ne laisser aucune occasion de trouble et differends entre nos subjects, avons permis et permettons à ceux de ladite religion pretendue reformée vivre et demeurer par toutes les villes et lieux de cestuy notre royaume et pays de notre obéissance, sans etre enquis, vexez, molestez, ny adstraints a faire chose pour le faict de la religion contre leur conscience" (*Ibid.*, xv. 174). The whole edict is given, pp. 170-199 (April 1598). There was a number of secret articles, to which the Parliament offered a stout resistance.

of worship in all towns and villages where it was in vogue before the year 1597, with the exception of Paris and five leagues around. It declared Protestants eligible for all public offices, and instituted special courts in several of the Parliaments, whose members were composed of an equal number of Protestants and Catholics, for the administration of justice to litigants of the two creeds (*chambres miparties*). It guaranteed their admission to all schools, colleges, and hospitals, and granted permission to found such in all the towns where their worship was legalised. It even permitted them to retain the fortified places of which they were in possession, on condition, however, of desisting from all political intrigues, whether within or without the kingdom, or forming any league or association prejudicial to the royal authority and the terms of the edict. On no pretext were they to assemble in arms, or construct fortifications, or levy taxes for military purposes. The retention of the fortified towns was meant merely as a guarantee of good faith, not as a recognition of their political power; but while Henry might justly presume on his ability to maintain the peace, the concession left them an organisation which might, and did, in fact, become, during his son's earlier reign, the nurse of faction and civil war. It was left to Richelieu to improve on this part of the edict by suppressing a political and military power dangerous to order, while respecting its principle. That principle was, of course, not that of toleration in the modern sense. It was not that of full toleration even for the Huguenots. They must, for instance, observe the Catholic festivals; their preachers and lecturers were not allowed the free expression of opinion in controversial matters; Protestant books might only be printed in Protestant towns. We should indeed greatly err if we mistook in Henry IV. the enlightened apostle of toleration pure and simple. The Edict of Nantes is the work of a politician, not of a philosopher in advance of his age. It sprang from no more profound views than those suggested by political necessity and the goodwill of the king towards his old comrades in arms and fellow-worshippers. Otherwise Henry acted in matters of faith as the conventional *bona-fide* Catholic sovereign of the time, to whom Protestantism was error, which it was his duty to combat abroad, if not at home. While he interceded for the persecuted Catholics of England and Holland, he opposed the spread of Protestantism in Italy, where he acted the part of the champion of the Roman Church and the temporal power of the Pope. He warned the Pope and the Doge of Venice to be on their guard against the propagandism of Geneva. He identified himself completely with the interests of the Church to which he professed

adhesion, while honourably resisting all pressure to encroach on the edict of toleration at home. His *rôle* as "the most Christian king" exacted the profession of an orthodoxy which would not admit any truckling to heresy outside the compulsory minimum. The day of the philosopher-king had not yet come in an age in which religious prejudice and passion were strong on either side. Conciliation could not venture beyond the Edict of Nantes, and even if Henry had desired to favour freedom of conscience as a principle of universal application, his official position as a Catholic sovereign would have rendered the attempt hopeless. It is all the more to his credit that he persistently refused to resile from his engagements to his former fellow-Protestants. He never forgot what he owed to the Huguenots, even when called on to play the part of a zealous Catholic. "I have been far too well served and assisted by them," said he, "in the days of my adversity, to yield on this point, and, besides, I should excite far more dangerous commotions in the State than in the past."[1] And it should not be forgotten that the Edict of Nantes, with all its limitations, was a great achievement, considering the circumstances of the age. Henry achieved what it was impossible to attain in other countries, where either Catholicism or Protestantism was in the ascendant. He compelled the adherents of the two creeds to live in peace on fairly equitable terms. Protestants could publicly worship God, and even exercise the rights of citizenship in spite of their creed. This was a great step in advance of the narrow religious antagonisms which persecution had begotten. In England, Scotland, Germany, Holland, not to speak of Italy, Austria, Spain, this was impossible for many a long day. From this point of view, we may say that it was well that Henry had been a Protestant, well that he became a Catholic.

His tolerant policy embraced even the Jesuits, to whom the Parliament and the Sorbonne were as hostile as to the Huguenots. The Parliament attributed to its machinations, though without proof, Chatel's attempt on the king's life, and in condemning the would-be assassin, condemned the order "as corrupters of youth, perturbers of the public peace, and enemies of the king and the State,"[2] and banished it the realm. It sent Père Guignard, the author of a manuscript work in which the king was bitterly reviled, to the gallows. Henry at this period shared their aversion, for the Jesuits had been the most implacable of his opponents, the abettors of Philip II., the sworn henchmen of the Pope. For several years he steadfastly turned a deaf ear to the overtures for their rehabilitation. "As

[1] Lettres Missives, v. 15. [2] Isambert, xv. 91-93.

to the Jesuits," wrote he to the Duke of Luxembourg, "I replied to the legate ingenuously that if I had two lives, I would willingly give one of them for the satisfaction of his Holiness in this matter, but as I had only one, I owed it to my subjects to preserve it, for these zealots have shown themselves so fanatic and enterprising, while they remained in the kingdom, that they are intolerable. They never cease to seduce my subjects, to spin their intrigues, not so much for the purpose of conquering and converting the heretics as to establish their power within my realm and to enrich themselves at the expense of everybody. I can truly say that my affairs have only prospered, and my person has only been in safety, since their banishment. It is impossible that they can be tolerated in France by those who love my life and quiet."[1] This was a severe judgment, yet Henry lived to recall, and even become the zealous patron of the Jesuits. He owed this singular rebound in favour of toleration and patronage to the influence of the astute Père Cotton. The edict of the 17th September 1603 annulled that of January 1595, on the express condition that the order should refrain from all intrigues against the king, and the peace of the kingdom, "without reservation or exception whatsoever." Even with this precaution, the Parliament strenuously opposed their readmission, and on the 24th December, the first president, De Harlay, voicing its remonstrances, denounced the order as dangerous to both Church and State, as the sworn henchmen of the Papacy, and therefore hostile to Gallican liberties, as the instruments of Spain and the League, and the advocates of regicide. France, he warned, would be the prey of innumerable evils from the nefarious machinations of these intriguing fathers. In reply, Henry magnanimously, but not too wisely, made light of the fears of the first president, and skilfully adduced all that could be said in favour of toleration. He defended them from the charge of ambition by pointing to their poverty and their refusal of ecclesiastical dignities. He could see in the antagonism of their ecclesiastical opponents only the antagonism between ignorance and learning. Were not their hardest critics the ecclesiastics of evil life? He refused to believe that they taught the doctrine of regicide. Because Chatel was a Jesuit, was it reasonable to believe that every Jesuit was a Chatel, that all the apostles were Judases, because there was one Judas among the Twelve? He refused to believe, too, that they would sacrifice to the Pope the allegiance they owed to their king. Certainly a great stretch of faith, considering their past attitude in things political. That, how-

[1] Lettres Missives, v. 15.

ever, he added, was ancient history. They had believed that they were acting a right part, and, like others, they had deceived themselves. Toleration should be granted to every Frenchman willing to be a loyal subject, and this toleration he was resolved to enforce. "Leave this affair to me," he concluded, "I have managed others far more difficult, and think only of doing what I tell you."[1]

No exception could be taken to the edict, if the conditions as to reservations were honestly observed. But was it possible for the militant order of the Church *par excellence* to refrain from troubling "the repose of the kingdom"? Could the recall of the Jesuits be anything but the revival of the League under another name? Could the Jesuits observe faith with the Huguenots, and refrain from plotting against them? Henry evidently believed so, but he as evidently did not know an order which absorbs the citizen in the ecclesiastic, and places Church and Pope above State and king. He overlooked the fact that they were as much a political party as a religious order, doubly dangerous, because they knew how to cloak political aims with religious pretences, and if it was dubious policy to conserve the political power of the Huguenots, in spite of stipulations to the contrary, it was equally dangerous to play into the hands of the greatest adepts in intrigue that the world has known. Political necessity might explain the concession to the Huguenots, whose experience had taught them that without more substantial guarantees than treaties, their lives and liberties were not safe. It was a different thing in the case of an international order which was but another name for a vast fraternity, whose solidarity was unique, and whose aims were not hampered by national or even moral considerations. The sequel was to show that they were to abuse the toleration granted them by working for the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, and the establishment of an ecclesiastical tyranny which, however beneficial to the Pope, was incompatible with the best interests of France.

In Henry IV. the absolute king reappears after nearly half a century of civil and religious strife, which threatened to submerge the throne of a Louis XI. and a Francis I. under a sea of anarchy, and disintegrate France. He inherited the autocratic instincts of his predecessors, and though he could suffer contradiction in the privacy of the cabinet, especially from the rigid and honest Sully, he could ill brook opposition to his royal will. He had fought his way to mastery over faction and sedition, and that mastery he was determined

[1] Lettres Missives, vi. 182-185. The Parliament gave way and registered the edict in January 1604 (Isambert, xv. 288).

to maintain against all and sundry." There was no room in the same State for Henry IV. and refractory Parliaments, or States-General. The States-General never got the chance of disputing his imperious will, and on the Parliaments he kept the reins very tight. During his reign, France has no constitutional history, less even than during that of Francis I., when the Parliament attempted, at least on one or two occasions, to play a political *rôle*. It is a regrettable fact that Henry did not endeavour to nurture some measure of constitutional government, for he, perhaps, of all the French monarchs was the best fitted to venture the experiment. He would have been the very man, in many respects, to co-operate in the work of reform with such an Assembly as the States-General of 1560. By so doing, his government would have been a greater boon to France than it was, for it was the highest political wisdom to temper the power of the Crown by at least a moderate measure of popular control. To identify the interests of Crown and people, by seeking the co-operation of the people, in its corporate capacity, in the work of legislation, would have been the surest road to the goal of good government and national prosperity. Or, to change the metaphor, he would have shaped the safest course of the ship of State towards the future, if he had taught the crew to lend a helping hand at the wheel, instead of seeking to steer it alone and exposing it to the risk of shipwreck at the hands of an incapable captain in coming days of storm and stress. Such a policy did not accord with Henry's autocratic temper. In this respect he is the true successor of Francis I., the forerunner of Richelieu and Louis XIV., and in view of the factious and violent doings of Parliaments and States-Generals during the previous quarter of a century, the intense reaction in favour of absolute rule was natural, though it might not be altogether wise. Unlike Francis I., however, he combined with the autocrat the popular sympathies of a Louis XII. in his devotion to the welfare of the people. Though he could lecture down obstruction in a merciless, slashing fashion as no King of France had done before him, it is eminently creditable to his enlightened administration, that, in the main, his drastic opposition to obstruction arose from his desire to do the best he could for France, to inaugurate and maintain wise and beneficial government. The glory and prosperity of France was his passion, and appealed to his generous impulses far more powerfully than the mere craving for power and self-glorification. He was no vain egoist on the throne, though he could be amenable enough to flattery. He could be one of the most unconventional of men even in his representative capacity

as king. When he is most the master, he is most the man. Take the following characteristic lecture on the 7th February 1599 to the refractory Parliament, which would fain resist his effort to inaugurate religious peace in order to be free to heal the wounds of forty years of civil war. "You see me here in my cabinet where I can speak to you not in my royal robes, or invested with sword and hat, like my predecessors, nor as a prince who wishes to speak to foreign ambassadors, but clad as the father of a family, *en pourpoint*, to speak familiarly to his children." Clearly impatient of the conventional trick of hiding one's sentiments in formal phraseology, and resolved to tell these legal formalists, these loud-voiced, intolerant preachers of the Paris pulpits, the plain truth in defiance of what is called style and etiquette. For Henry IV. on such occasions, style and etiquette are the mere bugbears of formal souls. Therefore to the point in the bluntest fashion, even if his auditors shiver for horror at both style and matter. The verification of the Edict of Nantes, he tells them, is absolutely necessary in the interest of the public weal and must be done. "You are bound to obey me as my subjects, and the obedience rendered to my predecessors is all the more due to me, because I have re-established the State. . . . You, gentlemen of the Parliament, would not occupy your places but for me. I do not wish to exalt myself, but I have no other example to invoke except myself. . . . I know that there have been intrigues in the Parliament, and that some of you have excited the factious preachers, but I shall give my orders with respect to them and shall pay no attention to you. . . . I shall cut the roots of all factious and all seditious sermons. . . . I have leaped on the walls of towns; I shall leap as quickly on the top of barricades. . . . I know all about you, more than you do of yourselves. You may commune and intrigue; I shall know what each of you will say. I know what is going on in your houses, all that you do. I have a little demon that tells me all. . . . Formerly I played the soldier, and people talked of my deeds; now I am king, and speak as king, and will be obeyed. The men of justice are indeed my right arm, but if the gangrene attacks the right arm, the left must cut it off. When my regiments refuse to serve me, I disband them. . . . Away with this eternal chatter about the Catholic religion, and all these loud-shrieking ecclesiastics. Let me give to one a benefice worth 2,000 livres, to another a pension, and they will not say another word."[1] This is the voice of the master with a vengeance, but there are occa-

[1] For Henry's speech see Lettres Missives, v. 89-94. His response to the Parliament of Toulouse, which came to St Germain to remonstrate against the edict, was equally drastic. See v. 180-182.

sions when the voice of the master is best. The Parliament had protracted its opposition to the edict for nearly twelve months, and Henry was determined that legal quibbling and religious cant should be allowed no longer to frustrate sound principles of government. Every reasonable person will be inclined to conclude that legal formality and hypocritical prejudice got what they deserved that day. The Parliament was doubtless shocked, but it registered the edict.

The Parliament was not always disposed to be hectored into submission. It held tenaciously to its right to refuse to register in many cases, and Henry was forced to reckon with its due authority and to yield to a body of able jurists, who knew the law far better than he, and was jealous for its maintenance. But in cases where their contentions trenched on the royal prerogative, he was inexorable. "In such affairs" (the conclusion of treaties), he told the Chamber of Accounts of Nantes, which objected to the treaty with the Duke of Mercœur, "I do not communicate my power to any one. To me alone in my kingdom pertains the right to accord a treaty, make war or peace, as it shall please me."[1] He was never slow to insist on the fact of the royal authority, for the royal authority had had a very bad time of it these forty years past, and the only alternative to obedience to royalty appeared to be anarchy. He was, however, willing to take counsel, and constantly gave ear to the representations of towns, corporations, provinces.[2] He had recourse once at least (in November 1596) to an Assembly of the Notables at Rouen, whose co-operation he sought in the difficult task of restoring order and prosperity at the conclusion of the civil war. His desire, he told them, was to earn, with their assistance, the glorious titles of "liberator and restorer of the State." "I have not assembled you, like my predecessors, to demand your approval of my will, but to receive your counsels in order to follow them—in short, to put myself under your wardenship."[3] This did not mean that he would yield to dictation or become the creature of faction, like his three weak Valois predecessors. "I mean what I say," returned he to Gabrielle D'Estrees, who expressed surprise at such an admission, "but on the understanding that it is with my sword at my side."[4] He respected the privileges of the Provincial Estates, and these assemblies were

[1] Lettres Missives, iv. 970.

[2] See, for instance, *ibid.*, iv. 363, 508, 684.

[3] *Ibid.*, iv. 657; cf. Isambert, xv. 118.

[4] Journal de Henri IV., par Pierre de L'Estoile, Petitot, xlvii. 185; Œconomies Royales, iii. 20.

always the nurses of a certain measure of local liberty and public spirit. We find him, too, reproving the lieutenant-governor of Nantes for his aggressive attitude towards the citizens, and ordering him to preserve their privileges and exemptions.[1] Nay, he could retreat from an embarrassing situation and allow the people to have its way, as in the case of the election of a mayor of Poitiers, in which he had interfered too precipitately.[2] He was always anxious to carry the nation with him, studied it in all his enterprises, strove hard to reconcile its hostile factions and unite them around the throne,[3] waived his purpose occasionally in response to remonstrance, or objection rather than risk friction, even if resolute to brave opposition when he was convinced that it was best that his will should prevail. He had a surprising insight into the fact that practically, if not theoretically, government must be a compromise between governed and governor, and that even the absolute ruler must reckon with other wills besides his own. It is simply impossible to substitute one will for the wills of fifteen million people, especially in an age when political faction and religious passion have only been scotched, not killed. In particular he sought to avoid extreme measures, to forestall rather than suppress disaffection, to woo submission by prudence, not force it by fear, to observe the forms of justice. He desired the law to rule through him; in practice, if not in theory, subordinated himself to the law. It is the Parliament, for instance, and not a special commission, that condemns Marshal Biron, the conspirator from whom he sought in vain to extort an admission of guilt in order to be able to pardon him. "Observe the ordinary course of justice," he exhorts M. de la Force. "By so doing you will win respect for me, and will not be accused of passion or injustice in this matter."

Though an autocrat in temper, Henry proved a model administrator. Having achieved peace, his grand aim was to woo prosperity by enlightened and energetic government. His correspondence shows how alert and active was his interest in, how wide and firm his grasp of affairs. He possessed the happy knack of doing a vast amount of work in an off-hand fashion, without laborious effort, which was not much to his liking, and yet usually with a ready perception of the right means to the desired end. His love of France, his devotion to its greatness and its prosperity, above all, his sympathy with the people, are the incentives to noble ends nobly fulfilled. A sentence from one of his earlier letters, after the conclusion of peace, places Henry IV. before us in his true character as

[1] Lettres Missives, v. 72. [2] *Ibid.*, vii. 694.
[3] See, for instance, Œconomies Royales, vii. 6.

administrator. It was addressed in his usual winning manner to his "very dear and good friends," the Syndic and Council of Geneva, and requested them to send him workmen skilled in the planting of mulberries for the cultivation of the silkworm. "The recent wars having so sadly devastated our kingdom that our subjects are for the moment in a state of poverty and ruin, we have esteemed it pertinent to the care which we ought to have for their welfare and advantage, to devise the means fitted to aid them to recover prosperity, especially to enable them by their work and diligence to redress and maintain their fortunes," etc.[1] He was fortunate in the selection of his fellow-workers in the cause of regeneration and reform, particularly of Maximilian de Bethune, Baron de Rosni, better known by his later title of Duke of Sully, whom he made superintendent of finances, grand master of the artillery, governor of Poitou and of the Bastile, and superintendent of buildings and fortifications. Sully had proved his fidelity and his pre-eminent ability as a devoted supporter of the Bourbon cause throughout the vicissitudes of the civil war. He remained true to his Protestantism after his hero's conversion, and what is still more creditable, he maintained the severity of his Calvinistic principles amid the moral laxity of a court, of which he was the most conspicuous ornament. Sully was Henry's *alter ego* in devotion to the welfare of France, if not in character, for no two men destined to work in such close association could have been more unlike in manner and disposition. The affinity that bound them together was an affinity of contrast. Sully is the Cato of his age, austere, blunt, harsh, economical, to whom the ways of a gay, extravagant court are hateful, while Henry is the impersonation of gaiety, affability, generosity, good-fellowship. What might be regarded as a still greater impediment to harmonious co-operation, both were men of hot temper, Henry at times, perhaps, the more choleric of the two, and Sully was not seldom made unpleasantly aware of the fact. Hot words passed between them, and Henry, in a moment of passion, would allow himself to make use of the right to be the least choice in his language. Happily the genial monarch was not vindictive, and Sully's occasional threats of resignation were not seriously meant or taken. On one of these choleric occasions monarch and minister concluded the debate in a towering passion which threatened the collapse of their administrative co-operation. "I can suffer this man no longer," burst out Henry, while the minister was still within earshot; "he does nothing but contradict me and cavil at everything I do; but, by God, I will make him do my bidding, and will not see

[1] Lettres Missives, v. 206 (21st February 1600).

him again for a fortnight." Next morning there was a tap at Sully's door, and in stepped Henry to disarm his morose reception with a laugh and a slap on the shoulder. "Ho, ho, here is M. de Sully still in the dumps, and I am no longer angry. There, embrace me, and continue to use your accustomed freedom. If you acted otherwise, you would not be so anxious for the welfare of the State. When you cease to withstand what displeases you, I shall conclude that you no longer love me." On another occasion the suspicion that the minister was intriguing with the Duke of Épernon, who claimed the command of the Guards, against the royal nominee, very nearly brought about a rupture. After a long conference, Sully succeeded in completely justifying himself from this aspersion on his honesty, and Henry in his usual generous fashion prevented him from falling on his knees, in order that his enemies might not have it in their power to say that he had pardoned him.[1] There were court cabals, too, to enhance the difficulties of the reformer's task, intrigues of courtiers or rivals who took offence at his influence. His jealous temper and his self-consciousness, coupled with his bluntness, did not tend to smooth his relations with his colleagues, and there is some truth in the charge that in his Memoirs[2] he made the most of his services to the State, while lacking in the generous appreciation of those of Sancy, Villeroy, Jeanin, De Thou, Du Plessis-Mornay, and others of his fellow-workers. Nevertheless there can be no question as to his sterling merits as finance minister, and these very merits exposed him to the malicious detraction and his work to the obstruction of royal mistresses, corrupt financiers, and court parasites. Moreover, his Calvinism was a thorn in the flesh of the bigots, who found a back door to the royal ear at times. It needed all Henry's shrewdness to parry the underhand blows aimed at his minister's head. Malicious words did not easily stick in his memory, and Sully had nothing more serious to complain of than a momentary coolness. "Continue only to serve me faithfully," we find him writing in 1598, "and leave these fellows to talk. They only bear you enmity because of the good you do."[3]

These difficulties of a personal kind were puny compared with those involved in the almost hopeless situation with which Sully was called on to grapple at his *début* as finance minister. How to restore prosperity to a country which had been well-nigh bled to death by

[1] Lettres Missives, vi. 427-430.

[2] Mémoires des sages et royales Œconomies d'Estat de Henri le Grand, usually cited as the Memoirs of Sully. Petitot's Collection, second series, i. to ix.

[3] Lettres Missives, v. 27.

the calamities and sufferings of nearly forty years of civil strife, was one of the hardest problems ever presented to financial expert. France was reduced to a condition of material coma. During the years immediately preceding the accession of Henry IV., the victims of war and its concomitant evils numbered 800,000. Nine towns and 250 villages had been destroyed, 128,000 houses given to the flames. Many parts of the country were a desert, commerce and industry annihilated, and the enormous debt of two hundred and forty-five millions of livres was a Sisyphus stone which might have seemed to the most indomitable patriot a hopeless impediment in the way of recovery.[1] Such was the legacy bequeathed by Henry III. to Henry IV. Five years of civil war had intensified the misery and desolation of France, and augmented the debt, which in 1594 stood at three hundred and fifteen millions, by nearly one-fourth. It was still further increased by the large sum, amounting to thirty-two millions more, which Henry was forced to pay for the submission of the Leaguist leaders.[2] Against this appalling debit, Henry could only place a nominal credit of twenty-three millions, the sum total of his annual revenue, which was sadly attenuated by the dilapidations of corrupt officials, of whom the Italian, François D'O, finance minister till 1594, was the chief, and by the arrears of the *tailles* which a starving peasantry was unable to pay. But for the genius and the indomitable will of Sully, Henry would probably have remained bankrupt to the end of his reign, and his great schemes for France have proved but pious wishes. It is the glory of the minister that he had the courage to face, and the resource to cope with an apparently hopeless situation. Admitted to the Council of Finance in 1595, his dour and persistent inquisitiveness into the doings of its corrupt members would not be denied, in spite of strenuous obstruction. From the council he carried his researches, in 1596, into four of the generalities or fiscal districts of the country. The corrupt receivers-general, treasurers-general, intendants, and the rest of the swindling fiscal hierarchy had not made allowance for the phenomenon of an honest man with a will of his own, who would persist in sniffing into their ledgers, and asking embarrassing questions as to the vast sums that had slipped into their unfathomable pockets instead of the national exchequer. Such a ferret of a man, with a genius for arithmetic, such intolerable doggedness, had never before been known to wear the insignia of office in France, that happy

[1] Bailly, Histoire Financière de la France, i. 284, 285, who takes his information from a contemporary writer.

[2] Poirson, Histoire de Henri IV., ii. 162-165.

hunting ground of corrupt officialdom. Corrupt officialdom swore terribly, and swelled the chorus of calumny, which denounced the implacable inquisition of the *parvenu* as exaction, impudence, injustice, and tried to frighten the king with the spectre of popular revolt. Henry hesitated whether to recall him or not, but when Sully turned up at Rouen with a million and a half livres in his carts, and exposed the hypocritical outcry of his enemies by producing documentary evidence in proof of their defalcations, Henry quickly discovered that calumnies were no answers to embarrassing questions. What about the 80,000 crowns, for instance, which the controller-general, M. D'Incarville, had forgotten to account for, though entered in his books? "The clerk has made a mistake," quoth M. D'Incarville. "Good, good," returned Henny; "enough of this. Don't mention it. We are all in the right since I have recovered my 80,000 crowns. Only let controllers and clerks look out another time, for they shall not play their tricks on me for the future. I have learned whom to trust, and whom not."[1]

Under stress of necessity Henry summoned the nation itself to the rescue. He appealed to an assembly of the Notables at Rouen in November 1596, to save the ship from foundering. The Notables were ready enough to put a hand to the wheel and make trial of their skill as steersmen. In other words, they reiterated the old demand, which their predecessors in the States-General had made at intervals of crisis for nearly three centuries, that taxation and finance should be placed under national control. Henry was obliged to make trial at least of the feasibility of such control in the form of a Council of Reason (Conseil de Raison), which was to dispose of half the revenue, the other half being consigned to the king. To raise this revenue from twenty-three to thirty millions of livres, the assembly decreed a tax of one sou per pound of provisions and merchandise entering the towns and villages of the kingdom (the *pancarte*).[2] But goodwill could not beget practical experience, and the attempt at parliamentary control broke down as usual when put to the test. The Assembly's Council of Reason proved a complete failure, and Sully, who believed in his own power to retrieve the situation, did nothing to help it out of its tribulation, nay, secretly hampered its operations. While he believed in taxation by popular consent, he did not believe in popular control of administration, and had all the contempt of genius for this amateur financial committee. His desire for sole

[1] Bailly, Histoire Financière, i. 286, 287.

[2] Isambert, xv. 117-119; cf. 131 (edict of March 1597), and Œconomies Royales, iii. 28 *et seq.*

control and a free hand was soon gratified. After several months of hopeless effort, the council gave it up in disgust. He succeeded in pulling through the two last difficult years of the war with Spain, and was rewarded after the conclusion of peace with the title of Superintendent of Finance.[1]

He brought both industry and genius to bear on his herculean task. From four o'clock in the morning, summer and winter, he toiled at his desk, and only interrupted his labours to direct the deliberations of the Council of State, which met on three days of the week, or to give audience to the crowd of suitors that daily besieged the arsenal.[2] For twelve years he continued thus indefatigably at his desk, and his industry has nobly imprinted itself on the history of the reign. I can only trace its main outlines.[3] His grand object was not merely to balance expenditure and income, but to create an annual surplus for the liquidation of the enormous debt which in 1598 was close on three hundred and fifty millions of livres. To this supreme end, he returned to the attack of corrupt finance officials, who were severely dealt with by a chamber of justice, interdicted the provincial governors from plundering the people by arbitrary exactions, abolished the burden of the *pancarte*, suppressed a host of petty offices and sinecures, regulated, if he did not abolish, the sale of judicial offices by the imposition of the *paulette*, instituted a commission for the purpose of verifying and reducing the claims of the public creditors. The researches of this commission disclosed a melancholy picture of mismanagement, corruption, and rapacity, and besides exposing the manufactured claims of many of the State creditors, furnished evidence of the alienation or usurpation of the royal domain under Henry's predecessors. The recovery of the lands or offices thus alienated or usurped, and the repudiation of bogus claims on the revenue, enabled him both to increase the resources of the Crown and reduce its burdens. The figures shall speak for themselves. By the year 1610 he had reduced the debt by one hundred millions of livres — almost exactly the amount which Henry had contributed to it during the first ten years of his reign,—the annual interest by five millions, and the obligations on the domain by eighty millions. To diminish the burden of the Crown was, however, not the sole motive

[1] Œconomies Royales, iii. 69-72, and 79-85.

[2] *Ibid.*, vi. 40-44; cf. 359, 360.

[3] For a detailed and masterly analysis of Sully's financial administration see Poirson, Histoire de Henri IV., iii. 74-171.

of Sully's reforming activity. Both monarch and minister were actuated by the noble desire to relieve the misery of the peasantry by a substantial reduction of taxation. The prosperity of the country is the true test of the greatness of a reign, the enlightenment and efficacy of government. In this respect, too, Sully's *régime* will stand the most exacting scrutiny. It was his fortunate lot to serve a master of like sympathies with his own. Unlike so many finance ministers of the French kings, his business was not merely to fleece the people to provide for the prodigal tastes of the sovereign and the cupidity of a parasite court. Like Louis XII., Henry's ambition was to deserve the proud designation of Father of the People. He would, he said, rather be known to posterity by this title than by any merely pompous attribute of royalty. Hence the effort to diminish the *taille* or direct taxation which pressed hard on the peasantry, and the remission of arrears to the extent of twenty millions of livres, which afforded a grim commentary on the poverty and suffering of the masses. Sully went far back into the history of the *tailles* in order to prove the title of the peasant to alleviation. He showed that in its origin it was an illegal exaction of arbitrary kings, who, as we have seen in the course of this history, had gradually increased its amount in order to maintain unjust and impolitic wars. What had at first been a voluntary offering had become a heavy and ever-increasing burden, levied without the consent of the Estates, which formerly exercised the right to grant, or refuse it.[1] His facts and his conclusions were not without effect on a monarch whose sympathy with the people was his best title to rule. Henry did not venture to renew the experiment of submitting taxation to parliamentary control, but he occasionally, though not invariably, listened to the advice and remonstrances of the Parliament. He hoped to be able to abolish direct taxation, as the result of revived prosperity and the good management of the increasing revenue accruing from it. "The king," says Sully, attributing his own enlightened policy to the master, who shared it, and encouraged the minister by his hearty co-operation,[2] "was resolved so to manage the revenues of the royal farms and domains, and to regulate his expenses in such a manner that it would have been easy to realise the design, long contemplated, of entirely discharging his subjects from all *tailles* and personal burdens, and *so* to provide for the maintenance of justice, militia, police, and finance, that all abuses being

[1] Œconomies Royales, vii. 465-473.

[2] Henry's correspondence bears ample witness to his interest in financial questions and his active co-operation in Sully's schemes.

eradicated, the people should experience a greater alleviation than if the king had entirely renounced all his revenues in their favour."[1] The *taille*, if not abolished, was at least reduced by four millions of livres, and the abuses connected with its assessment suppressed.[2] The local assessors were prohibited by severe penalties from arbitrarily exempting their relatives, or the wealthy members of the community who bribed them, and thus proportionately increasing the burden of the poor man. Unfortunately, Sully did not carry reform the length of attacking the privilege of exemption enjoyed by the nobility, though he ignored the claim of a host of subordinate government officials. Justice might have suggested the necessity of equable taxation, but feudal privilege was too deeply rooted to be ignored by a monarch who had been compelled to fight for his crown against the pretensions of grand seigneurs, and had to walk warily on the thorny path of reform. Moreover, the reforming minister could not shake himself altogether free from the aristocratic predilections of his order. He revived the right of franc fief, and would fain have driven all commoners from the Council of State in favour of men of rank like himself.[3] He left intact, too, the stringent game laws which reserved the pleasure and profit of the chase to the king, the princes, and the nobles at such cost to the crops of the long-suffering peasantry,[4] and even his fertile brain could discover no substitute for the still more oppressive *gabelle*, or salt tax, though he strove to diminish its abuses, and was anxious to abolish it.

Next to finance, the revival of agriculture occupied the largest place in Sully's mind. He was the warm patron of the farmer from reasons of both policy and sympathy. A prosperous agricultural class would mean a full exchequer, and make France formidable to her enemies. Good farmers made good soldiers, always a cardinal consideration as long as there was the domination of Spain to reckon with. And a thriving agriculture rather than a thriving industry was for Sully the first condition of general prosperity. "Labour and pasturage," he insisted, "are the breasts which nourish France." "The greatest and most legitimate benefit to the people proceeds principally from the cultivation of the soil, which repays their labour with compound interest in the shape of large quantities of corn, wine, vegetables, etc. Thereby they are enabled, not only to live in comfort, but to maintain commerce with neighbouring and distant countries, and obtain in return gold, silver, and everything

[1] Œconomies Royales, viii. 289.

[2] See, for instance, Isambert, xv. 226-228 (edict of March 1600).

[3] Œconomies Royales, viii. 210, 211. [4] See Isambert, xv. 246-253.

useful to man that they possess in greater abundance than in France. As the war has left so many poor people in misery, it is necessary to exploit all the agricultural resources of France in order to restore prosperity. Let, therefore, the marshes be drained," etc.[1] Henry shared his minister's sense of the importance of agricultural prosperity, though he did not harp so exclusively on this one string. One of his favourite books, which he would take up after dinner with all the avidity of the most inveterate novel-reader, was Olivier de Serres' "Théatre d'Agriculture," which pointed the way to larger results, based on the author's practical experience. The peasant accordingly found in monarch and minister intelligent and energetic legislators, who interfered to prevent his creditors from sequestrating his cattle and implements, to put down the lawlessness of the soldiery, who attempted to continue the pillage perpetrated with impunity during the last forty years, to help him to reclaim large tracts of marshy or waste land, and to inaugurate partial free trade by abolishing or modifying the restrictions on the export of corn and wine. It certainly was not for want of government protection and encouragement if every peasant had not his fowl in the pot of a Sunday.

Commerce and industry did not share to the same extent as agriculture in the enlightened solicitude of the minister. The impulse of development came from Henry rather than from Sully. The repair and construction of roads, bridges, canals, was indeed favourable to commercial and industrial as well as agricultural interests, but the greatest bane of all internal commerce, the network of provincial customs, which obstructed the transit of goods far more than ruined roads and bridges, was left intact. Even the local impositions which the financial exigencies of the first years of the reign had created, such as the Nouvelle Imposition d'Anjou, a tax assessed on wines transported by the Loire during the siege of La Rochelle, were allowed to subsist in time of peace. The free exportation of corn, permitted in abundant years like 1601, could be no great boon when the roads to the sea coast were barred by so many artificial obstacles. Sully's political economy was, in fact, by no means profound or original. Industry found still less favour in his eyes, for manufacturing industry, he held, led to the degradation of the people. A nation of laborious peasants is a stronger nation, morally and physically, than a nation of artisans. He would only favour at most the manufacture of coarse textile stuffs, service

[1] Edict for the draining of the marshes, 8th April, 1599, Isambert, xv. 212-222.

able to the people, and denounced luxury in dress and diet as prejudicial to the State. Henry did not share this somewhat antiquated view. It was saner policy, he contended, to provide for the tastes of all classes of the inhabitants and compel France to supply its own wants as far as possible. He took his own way in this important matter in spite of the grumblings of his Diogenes, and new manufactures—silk, linen, tapestry in particular—sprang up under his active patronage. In the matter of colonisation, too, the monarch was more far-seeing than the minister, and with his warm approbation the foundations of a French colonial empire were extended, if not exactly laid, by Champlain, who founded the settlements of Port Royal, Quebec, and Montreal in Canada.

The intellectual life of the reign[1] is sufficiently remarkable in some important respects to merit from us a passing notice. If it was not brilliant, it was respectable. As a ruler Henry IV. was immeasurably superior to Francis I.; as a man of culture he was greatly his inferior. Yet he possessed a great fund of intellectual power which came out not merely in his grasp of the problems of government, but in his witty sayings and sagacious maxims. Though his strength lay in practical administrative work, he was not without the ambition to invest his reign with the noble traditions of the earlier Renascence period. If he had not inherited the exquisite taste and literary instincts of Francis, he was not impervious to the things of the intellect. He could recognise and encourage, as his correspondence shows, the erudition of a Casaubon, the poetic genius of a Malherbe, and provide work as well as pensions for a large number of deserving architects and artists in the construction and decoration of the monumental edifices with which it was his ambition to immortalise his reign. He could appreciate Plutarch, if he could not descant on the beauties of a Homer or a Horace, a Raphael or a Da Vinci. Here is what he says of the great biographer in a letter to Maria de Medici: "You could have told me nothing more agreeable than the pleasure you derive from your reading. Plutarch always smiles on me with a fresh novelty; to love him is to love me, for he was the teacher of my youth. My good mother, to whom I owe all, whose affection watched so anxiously over my conduct, and who did not desire, as she said, to see in her son an illustrious ignoramus, put the book into my hands when I was scarcely more than a babe at the breast. Plutarch has been my conscience, and has whispered in my ear many honourable

[1] The reader will find an exhaustive account of the literature, art, science of the reign in the fourth volume of Poirson's Histoire de Henri IV.

counsels and excellent maxims to regulate my conduct of the government as well as my personal life."[1] This is the appreciation of the practical man rather than of the literary critic, for Henry's Greek would not stick to him, and Olivier de Serres' treatise on agriculture was, next to Plutarch, his vade-mecum. Yet he could appreciate the worth of what he could not perhaps adequately value in itself, and he deserves some share of the credit of the fact that his reign was intellectually and artistically a foretaste of that of Louis XIV. If Malherbe and Ronsard do not approach the heights of Corneille and Racine, and the "Satyre Ménippée" is its only literary masterpiece, the glory of the Louvre, the Place Royale, the Tuilleries, the College Royale were more enduring monuments of the munificence of a monarch whose aim was to create a new capital as the symbol of a France worthy of his reign.

For us the most salient feature of the intellectual life of the reign is the evidence which it affords of the growing potency of the critical spirit. As applied to politics, it appears in the "Satyre Ménippée,"[2] and if, compared with the grave but impassioned discussions of Huguenot and Leaguist political writers of the civil wars, it takes a lighter flight, it does not cease to be effective. Nay, it is on this account more dangerous to its enemy. The authors, who belong to the party of the Politiques, bring the battery of reason to bear on religious passion and political hypocrisy in a salvo of sarcastic laughter. Its influence was enormous in discrediting the selfish, intriguing opponents of Henry IV., and in its character and effects it was an earnest of the eighteenth century. Reason working by satire for great ends—what a *rôle* was in store for this mighty engine of destructive criticism, which at the end of the sixteenth century is on the side of legitimate monarchy, but which will by-and-by direct its shafts at the throne itself! And the critical spirit does not merely cover political intrigue with its biting ridicule. In the treatise "De la Sagesse,"[3] it attacks theology itself. The excesses of religious passion brought an inevitable sceptical reaction in their train, which the leaven of Montaigne tended to intensify. "Persecution," laments Villeroy, "has worked untold mischief to religion. It has made atheists of many men who would otherwise have been good Christians."[4] Can that be a divinely inspired religion which has desolated

[1] Lettres Missives, v. 462, 463.

[2] It consists of two parts. The first was written by Louis Leroi, priest and almoner of the young Cardinal Bourbon; the second by Pierre Pithou. Gillot. Rapin, Florent Chrétien, Passerat. Both were published in 1593.

[3] The first edition was published in 1601.

[4] Abridged from Villeroy's Mémoires d'Estat, ii. 307, 308.

and demoralised France with horror after horror those forty years past? is the question suggested at the end of the sixteenth century to a mind like that of Charron. "What execrable abominations," cries he indignantly, "has not religious zeal produced? What other passion has begotten results so terrible?" It is from this frame of mind that the treatise "De la Sagesse" sprang. The shibboleths of these Leaguist bigots, what are they but the presumptions of an ignorant tradition, galvanised by human passion? Let us look into the origins of these religions, which pretend a divine sanction for the most puerile beliefs, the most revolting horrors. These beliefs may satisfy the people, whom it may be good policy to preserve in obedience to the Church. They are too crass, too palpably false, to command the submission of thinking men. Charron accordingly proceeds to demonstrate the natural genesis and historical growth of all religions, which have much in common in their origin and development, present much the same phenomenon under different conditions, to arrive finally at natural religion, and the worship of the eternal Creator, as mirrored in His glorious works. "Nature, country, locality give us our religion; we derive it from the place of our birth and education; we are circumcised, baptized, Jews, Mahometans, Christians before we know that we are men. Religion is not of our choice and selection." It is time that thoughtful men at least should choose for themselves, and discard adhesion to the vast system of tradition, fable, miracle, so detrimental to humanity and morality. From all which it appears that Voltaire, Rousseau, and the Encyclopedists, who will only repeat a great deal that Charron has already said, will not improve much on the reactionary priest and theologian of the end of the sixteenth century.

Henry's foreign policy was emphatically a peace policy, peace being indispensable to the regeneration of France. His anxiety to preserve peace is all the more laudable, inasmuch as he was by no means insensible to what is called the glory of war. The mediæval fighting instinct was strong within him, but he was too sane a ruler to yield to the mediæval fighting mania. He had a predilection for a downright bloody battle, in which he himself could deal the hardest blows as well as play the general. He loved the excitement of the camp, preferred it by far to the laborious monotony of the cabinet. He was fascinated by military glory, and this fascination appears in his exaggerated estimate of this kind of distinction. It is "the true nourishment of every truly royal soul, the rose in the midst of the thorns." Yet Henry IV. is no rejuvenated Edward III. or Philip VI.; still less is he a mere king of the tournament order, mere Knight of

the Golden Fleece on the throne, like Francis I. He realises that war is by no means the real business of the ruler, or military distinction the true test of kingly capacity. Real war was not to him the mere roseate fiction of chivalry. Its horrors had made an indelible impression on his imagination and conscience. He had a horror, as he says himself, of uselessly shedding the blood of his subjects, and both his humanity and his sympathy with the people led him to look on war as an evil to be avoided, if possible, and in any case to be waged only in the cause of justice. At the same time, he did not overlook the fact that, in the circumstances of Europe, the way to avoid war was to forestall it, to be ready to fight in order not to be compelled to fight. Make war, if at all, for the sake of peace, since peace may not be had without it at times in this world of warring interests and ambitious statecraft, wage it energetically, finish it decisively, is the maxim of his statesmanship. *Si libet, licet*, was not his standard of political morality, as it was of a Louis XIV., or a Napoleon. No small share for the credit of this peace policy belongs to Sully. No more wars of ambition was the principle of foreign policy, which he constantly kept before the mind of his master. Wars of conquest had, he pointed out again and again, been the bane of French foreign policy for fully a century. "Give me twelve years of peace, and I will undertake to pay off the debt."[1] The tone of Henry's diplomacy is equally high. It is remarkably honest and straightforward in contrast to the Machiavellian methods of his predecessors, from the days of Louis XI. onwards. Not that Henry cannot veil his intentions on occasion, or keep his reservations to himself, or play the casuist when convenient. Diplomacy has, perforce, a moral code of its own, which we may be thankful is not the code of common life. But systematic and deliberate dissimulation was odious to him. The word of a king is sacred, is honestly meant as the supreme expression of loyal intentions. It could only be broken in view of some consideration of the highest utility, in virtue of change of circumstances or policy, and then frankly and with reasons of State given. His candour would alone have unfitted him for the *rôle* of the Machiavellian prince. "I desire my servants to abandon entirely such methods, and to have recourse only to those which are legitimate. In so doing they will never lack whatever assistance on my part shall be necessary."[2] This high-toned

[1] Œcon. Roy., vi. 367-373; cf. 380.

[2] Lettres Missives, v. 679. The reader will find a very admirable examination of Henry's diplomacy and foreign policy in M. Lacombe's Henry IV., though the Catholic sympathies of the writer might have been kept more under restraint.

diplomacy was rewarded with the success which its honest and pacific character deserved. With the exception of the short campaign against the Duke of Savoy in 1600, he succeeded in maintaining peace, and had the satisfaction of obtaining, by his energetic prosecution of this little war, an important accession of territory on the south-eastern frontier of France. It was all the more gratifying, inasmuch as it was a distinct step towards the goal of uniting all French-speaking people under the sway of the French crown. "It is only reasonable," he told the inhabitants of Bresse, "that you should be subject to the King of France. The Spanish language belongs to the King of Spain, the German to the Germans, French to me." The success of his diplomacy in Italy and Holland might well have earned him the title of the peacemaker of Europe. He intervened between the Pope and the Doge of Venice to prevent a struggle which would have compromised the peace not only of Italy, but of Europe. It was not a little due to his efforts that the Dutch Republic at last succeeded in extorting from Spain the recognition of its independence, as the condition of the cessation of a forty years' conflict. There is no philanthropy in international politics, and Henry's first consideration was, of course, the interest of France, which lay in the maintenance of peace within and without. His chief object was to checkmate Spain, but it is his glory that he strove to do so by pacific means. To this end he sought to draw the Italian States together in a league, which, aiming at safeguarding their integrity against the preponderance of Spain in the Peninsula, combined the Pope, Venice, Savoy, and Tuscany, and was supported by the Swiss. And when, in spite of his desire to maintain peace, the alternative of war stared him in the face in 1609, over the question of the succession to the Duchy of Cleves, his masterly diplomacy had prepared the way for the inevitable conflict with the Habsburg-Spanish power by alliances with England, Holland, Germany, and Italy. Ever since the Peace of Vervins, he had realised the contingency of a war with Spain and Austria, which had by no means abandoned, on the death of Philip II., the policy of dominating Europe. His calculations had been governed mainly by this menace to European liberty, and his determination to preserve national independence and international equilibrium under the hegemony of France. The fact shows that the practical politician was not lost in the philanthropic statesman. It would have been bad for France, bad for Europe, had he failed to reckon with the necessity of fighting the enemy of both. No doubt he aimed at the preponderance of France in place of that of Spain, but it was a preponderance very

different in character and results from that of a Philip II. It was favourable to toleration and reform within; it was favourable to liberty, independence, reform without. In the hands of a Henry IV., at least, it would not have involved the coercion of conscience, the suppression of national rights. And, therefore, the moral and political interests of Europe as well as of France, were bound up with the policy of antagonism to the Spanish-Habsburg dynasties.

The abasement of that power was to be the prelude to the grand design of establishing a federation of the nations, which should exemplify in practical politics the humanitarian principle of the Gospel. Primarily, the combination should embrace all States to which the Spanish-Habsburg domination was a menace. It should be a counterpoise to the vast military and territorial power of the King of Spain and the emperor, and both these allied potentates should be persuaded, if possible, and compelled, if need be, to sacrifice pretensions deemed incompatible with the liberty and peace of Europe. The amplification of the grand scheme[1] occupied for years the fervent brain of Sully, who wrote a series of exhaustive papers on its behalf.[2] In them the sagacity of the statesman is mingled with the zeal of the theorist, and the result of his humanitarian penmanship is a noble record of exalted principles of international policy. His main idea was to cultivate the sentiment of harmony between States naturally friendly, and to attempt to reconcile the interests of those naturally hostile. The result was on paper a grand combination of fifteen confederate States, each to retain its traditional form of government—whether monarchical, aristocratic, democratic,—and to be as nearly as possible equal in extent and power, in order to lessen the chance of friction. Christian Europe thus rearranged and federated should maintain an armed force, not in the service of national animosities or religious intolerance, but for the defence of the Christian nations against the Turk. Commerce should be free throughout the Federation, and all disputes between its members, as well as the supervision of the general welfare, should be entrusted to an authoritative and permanent council representing the whole. The corollary of political federation was a united Christendom. The three creeds—Catholic, Lutheran, Calvinistic—were to subsist (no

[1] The idea of establishing a permanent equilibrium of the Powers was started by Elizabeth, who communicated it to Sully, during a visit to England in September 1601. See Lettres Missives, v. 464, 465. This plan gradually developed in the minds of Henry and Sully into the grand scheme of a Christian Federation of Europe.

[2] See Œcon. Roy., vii. 88-104, 298-325, viii. 182-282, etc.

others being permitted), and if possible to be amalgamated by a gradual process of tolerant goodwill. The design was certainly grand, but it was visionary. To inaugurate political unity by tampering with national boundaries and ignoring historical contentions, was merely to court a European war, whose bitterness would have left the legacy of future struggle to posterity. Sully felt this insuperable objection, and exhausted his ingenuity to find a *modus operandi*. He emphasised the disinterestedness of Henry, and there is unquestionable sincerity in his emphasis. His object is "to render Christian kings, princes, and potentates void of envy, jealousy, distrust, and contrary desires and interests," and his master, in particular, the protector and the defender of the rights of all. He will save the people from the miseries of dynastic ambitions, and of their mutual hatred and bigotry. But his heart fails him at times, though he continues to expound his theory with the warm approbation of his master, and with all the seriousness of a great State question. Great, indeed, the question was, and the realisation of universal peace and fraternity must be the aspiration of all civilised peoples. But the time was not ripe for colossal experiments in humanitarian statesmanship, and even yet such experiments are but the aspirations of noble minds. To succeed, they must respect historic development, and foster political liberty and intellectual progress; in neither respect was Sully's plan feasible or even desirable. Nationality had grown and hardened since the decay of the old empire; had become, in fact, one of the mainsprings of modern political life, and would not be theorised out of existence as a political and moral force. Political liberty would have been cramped by a system which would have proved antagonistic to those ideals of emancipation whose realisation has been the glory of modern history. Sully's supreme council would have become an inquisition, his international army an instrument of coercion of this emancipation, while his united Church for Catholics, Lutherans, and Calvinists, would have been the death-warrant of intellectual liberty, even if it had been possible for Pope and Protestants to submit to a common suicide in the renunciation of their distinctive claims and principles. Paradox as it may seem, the best unity, both political and religious, is no unity. True liberty, true progress, cannot consist with the permanent and final elaboration of any political system or any religious creed. Their true life is derived from the conflict of antagonistic systems. This is the teaching of history at any rate. It may not commend itself to the votaries of tradition and convention in Church or State. It is a fact of social evolution notwithstanding.

Instead of marshalling the ranks of the European nations in the noble army of a Christian brotherhood, Henry was busy, on the eve o his assassination, with the task of collecting his forces for the renewa of the struggle with the traditional foe of France, over the question o the succession to the Duchy of Cleves. The dagger of Ravaillac whicl struck him down, on the 14th May 1610, at the climax of a brillian reign, staved off the struggle and at the same time deprived Sully's project of the only man who had the will and the power to attempt at least its partial realisation. Had only its spirit been cultivated by his successors, under whom the predominance of France was to be come as serious a menace to European liberty as the Habsburg Spanish striving for supremacy had been, Europe would have been spared untold calamity, and France revolution. The prosecution o a policy of war and conquest, against which Sully's scheme was in fact a noble protest, and which led to bankruptcy and irrepressibl popular discontent, was to be one of the most powerful incentives to the revolutionary spirit.

"Words," mournfully reflects the minister who knew his worth as no other man did, "cannot express the greatness of his loss, nor tears sufficiently mourn it."[1] The inconsolable grief of the French people is the best confirmation of this plaintive reflection. Never did France mourn so spontaneously for a king as for Henry IV., with the exception perhaps of Louis XII. The people felt that it had lost its truest friend, and Henry's merits as king could receive no more touching tribute than in its tears. This tribute he merited as few kings have done. "Have regard to the alleviation of the people, as far as possible,"[2] was his characteristic exhortation to Sully. It might serve as the motto of his life. He knew the value of the people, he understood that in spite of class privilege and class distinction, the people is literally the nation. He did not regard the people through the spectacles of aristocratic or middle-class prejudice, though he valued the French nobility as a powerful adjunct of the throne, and vaunted the title of the first gentleman of France. But the peopl is "the sinew of the national life, on which the national welfar depends." "If the people succumb, we must all perish with it." "If they ruin my people," he burst out in reference to the depreda tions of the soldiers in a certain district, "who will nourish me, who will sustain the charges of the State, who will pay your pensions?" "To strike at the people is to strike at me." His constant anxiety was to diminish the distance between the throne and the cottage, and in no relation does the innate frankness and humanity of the mar

[1] Œcon. Roy., viii. 290; cf. iv. 4, 5. [2] *Ibid.*, viii. 320.

come more charmingly out than in the intercourse of king and peasant. He strove to make himself familiar with the details of peasant life. Even the price of a sheep or a loaf is not beneath the notice of Henry IV. Everything pertaining to their interests is his interest, and the most admirable of the royal edicts are those concerned with the alleviation of the peasant's lot. The formalist might look on the kingly inquisitiveness as petty and undignified, and experience a shock at his familiarity with common mortals. Henry in truth was never more in his element than when doing these shocking things. What is called style was an abomination to his unconventional nature, though he could make the pompous Mendoza, with his Spanish grandiosity, feel, when he chose, that he was in the presence of the King of France.[1] No king ever spoke so habitually what he thought, and meant what he said. "What is on my lips is in my heart." The formalist might shudder; the people only loved him the more.

There is one stain on his character. His ungoverned licentiousness has given him an unenviable place among royal libertines. He was most apt to fall in love with every fair face in the kingdom, and his passion led him sometimes into ridiculous and embarrassing situations. It was his misfortune that he never knew the strength of conjugal affection, for both Margaret de Valois and Maria de Medici were never meant by nature to be the wives of Henry IV., and were totally unfitted to evoke the spirit of devotion. Without this salutary influence, the danger of moral shipwreck was, for such a fickle and sensual nature, very great. Morally he was a weak personality, the victim of his senses, utterly devoid of the manliness which comes of a healthy moral sense. It is creditable neither to his manliness nor his self-respect as king to find him the hero of such escapades as the following:—He has fallen madly in love with Gabrielle D'Estrées, and takes his way from Mantes to her father's country house, accompanied by five servants, in spite of the risks involved in the presence of two hostile garrisons on his road. Arrived within three leagues of the house, he dismounts, puts on the garb of a peasant, and carrying a sack of straw on his head, trudges ahead and knocks at the gate. The saucy Gabrielle, who at this period had given her heart to the Duc de Bellegarde, is very indignant that Henry should persist in coming between her and her lover, gives him a very bad reception, and sends him about his business without a single kind word. Still more deplorable was his conduct towards the young

[1] See Archives Curieuses, xiv. 393, 396, for a description of the imposing manner in which he received and snubbed the haughty ambassador.

Princess of Condé, whom he interviewed in the same ridiculous fashion, and whose husband was compelled to flee across the frontier in order to save his wife's honour from the consequences of a disgraceful passion. The political motives with which the royal gallant tried to explain away his resentment against the fugitive prince, only augmented the flagrancy of the scandal. In such matters he had the sense neither of decency nor of honour, and no unstable, amorous fool ever created so many worries to himself, as did this most sagacious of kings, who was the most incorrigible of libertines. He made the Louvre a domestic hell by installing the Marquise de Verneuil under the same roof with Maria de Medici, and thereby punished himself as well as outraged morality by the scandalous spectacle of the quarrels of an indignant queen and an impertinent mistress.[1] In an unguarded moment he had signed a promise of marriage to this ambitious beauty, and it required all Sully's inflexible firmness to deprive this *liaison* of grave political complications. The consequences to social morality of this lack of self-restraint or sense of duty were deplorable. How corrupt and shameless was the society of this time under such auspices, may be learned from the memoirs of a rake of the stamp of Marshal Bassompièrre, who retails the triumphs of a shameless gallantry with a disgusting frankness and *bravoure*, which might vie with the escapades of the notorious Duc de Richelieu under Louis XV.[2] We may accept the assurances of contemporaries that Henry became a sincere Catholic, and was most assiduous in his observance of the rites of the Church. Catholic writers dwell fondly on the fact. His Catholicism did not make him a better man at all events, and it is to be regretted that in the matter of self-control and temperance, he proved as bad a Catholic as he had been a Huguenot. There is only one redeeming feature of this nauseous subject. He refrained from sacrificing the good of the State to his sensuality. No mistress was allowed to interfere in administrative affairs, or to give the incorruptible Sully more than a passing anxiety on this score. Extravagance was the utmost stretch of his complaisance, but with a Sully at his elbow, extravagance was not allowed to become a source of oppression. There was no Pompadour or Valentinois at Henry's court. He professed the highest principles of duty,

[1] "C'estoit une brouillerie perpetuelle" (Histoire des Amours d'Henri IV., in Archives Curieuses, xiv. 336; see also Mémoires du Card. de Richelieu, i. 4-9).

[2] See Mémoires du Maréchal de Bassompièrre, edited for the Société de l'Histoire de France by Le Mis de Chantérac, t. i. M. Chantérac might have expurged part of the exploits of the marshal with advantage. They are, however, valuable to the historian as illustrating the moral tone of Henry's court.

if he did not practicany observe them in the matter of personal morality. "Rather would I renounce mistresses, amours, dogs, falcons, dice, cards, festivities, pastimes, than lose the least occasion and opportunity to acquire honour and glory, of which the principal, after my duty towards God, my wife, children, and faithful servitors and people, are to conduct myself as a royal prince in faith and deed, and to crown the end of my days with deeds fitted to perpetuate my name."

SOURCES OF THIS CHAPTER.—Isambert, Recueil, xv.; Mémoires de Madame de Mornay, edited for the Société de l'Histoire de France, by Madame de Witt; Lettres Missives de Henri IV., edited for the Documents Inédits by Berger de Xivrey; Procès Verbaux des États Généraux de 1593, edited for *idem* by Auguste Bernard; De Meaux, Luttes Religieuses; Mémoires des Sages et Royales Œconomies d'Éstat de Henri le Grand, usually cited as Memoirs of Sully, in Petitot's Collection, second series, tomes i. to ix.; Estoile, Journal du Règne de Henri IV. in Petitot; Bailly, Histoire Financière de la France; Poirson, Histoire de Henri IV.; Satyre Menippée, first published in 1593; Charron, De la Sagesse; Villeroy, Mémoires d'Éstat; Lacombe, Henri IV.; Archives Curieuses, t. xiv.; Mémoires du Maréchal de Bassompièrre, edited for the Société de l'Histoire de France by M. Chantérac; Mémoires du Cardinal de Richelieu in Petitot.

## CHAPTER X.

### LOUIS XIII. AND RICHELIEU—THE CONCENTRATION OF THE MONARCHY (1610-1643).

THE magnitude of Henry's loss became apparent in the renewal of the disorders from which his rule had delivered France. His reign had not been free from conspiracy, and it required all the alertness and firmness of a strong government, which did not hesitate to strike hard on occasion, as Marshal Biron discovered to his cost, to frustrate the machinations of malcontent grandees like the Duke of Bouillon. This strong government suddenly gave place to one of those unhappy intervals of minority which had so often given full rein to aristocratic faction, and the minority of Louis XIII., who became king at the age of nine, added one more sinister chapter of misgovernment and civil strife to French history. Maria de Medici, who was proclaimed regent,[1] was still less fitted than Catherine had been to give continuity to the strong *régime* of her husband. She had neither political ability nor force of character, and unlike Catherine, she had not the wisdom to adopt a sagacious policy, or to choose the best men to carry it out.[2] Power passed from the hands of Sully to those of two Italian favourites, Concino Concini, who became Marshal D'Ancre, and his wife Leonora Galigai, whose main striving was to satisfy their unfathomable rapacity.[3] Sully saw with bitterness of soul the surplus of a well-filled treasury squandered on a swarm of place-hunters and court parasites. There was a general scramble for dignities, pensions, offices, on the part of

[1] Isambert, xvi. 4, 5.

[2] "En ce qui touchait les affaires générales, le peu de connoisance qu'y avoit la reine, le peu d'application de son esprit qui refuit la peine en toutes choses, et ensuite l'irrésolution perpétuelle en laquelle elle etoit, lui faisoit prendre créanciers ceux qu'elle pensoit lui pouvoir donner meilleur conseil" (Richelieu, Mémoires, i. 263, 264).

[3] "Il avoit pour principal but d'elever sa fortune aux plus hautes dignités ou puisse venir un gentilhomme" (Richelieu, Mémoires, i. 454).

the great magnates, who had chafed at the curb imposed on their ambition and their egotism these past fifteen years. "We have lost a good master," said Soissons sarcastically, "let each provide for himself."[1] Condé, Bouillon, Mayenne, Épernon, Guise were not slow to profit from the hint to regain place and power. Among this tribe of greedy and factious magnates the life of the austere minister of Henry IV. was one of constant vexation and humiliation. Equally galling to his patriotism was the reversal of the policy of antagonism to the political domination and the religious bigotry of Spain, by the proposal of a marriage between Louis XIII. and the eldest daughter of Philip III. His isolation was complete, and he determined in January 1611 to seek a more congenial solitude in his government of Poitou. He carried with him the consciousness of his great services. "I have served the late king to the best of my ability. . . . I hope that France will recognise my services, and will bear me gratitude, for I know no man who could have done what I have done."[2] He carried with him, too, the regrets, if not the affection of the people, for Sully did not understand the art of wooing popularity, and had made many enemies and calumniators by his harsh and blunt manner and his invulnerable economy. Yet he left Paris amid the tears of the populace. "What a foolish beast is the people," muses the Florentine secretary, Scipione Ammirato; "during the life of Henry, it bore M. de Sully deadly hatred, calling him dog, assassin, worse names which I would rather not repeat. To-day, when he is deprived of the superintendentship of the Bastille, it cries in broken accents, 'It is true that he was a churl, but it is also true that he has well served the king and the kingdom. . . . Had he not done so, he would not have made so many enemies.'"[3] His churlish harshness disappeared in his retirement, and the explanation of the change is equally creditable to the integrity of the minister and the high character of the man. "As long as he had charge of the finances," he explained, "he knew that people only came to see him because they hoped to get something out of him, and consequently the service of the king demanded that he should comport himself thus. Now his visitors came only because they desired to show him honour, and therefore he was full of courtesy and amiability towards all."[4] His detractors, whose malicious aspersions Cardinal Richelieu has demeaned himself to repeat,[5] gained by his departure, but their gain

[1] Zeller, La Minorité de Louis XIII., 49.
[2] *Ibid.*, 218.
[3] *Ibid.*, 221.
[4] Ammirato in *ibid.*, 224.
[5] See, for instance, Mémoires de Richelieu, tom. i. (Petitot's Collection, tom. x.), 165.

was the loss of France. Under Concini's auspices,[1] the ruin of the system of economy, reform, and respect for the law was swift and thorough. His principle of government consisted in amassing wealth and assuring his predominance against the intrigues of men as selfish and rapacious, if not so incapable, as himself. A shower of anonymous pamphlets gave expression to the disgust and discontent of the nation,[2] and its discontent afforded a ready handle for the intrigues of a Condé and an Épernon, who were actuated by similar motives of personal interest. They loudly called for the States-General, that refuge of aristocratic faction and pseudo-patriotism, and as they emphasised their pseudo-patriotism by an armed demonstration, the regent was forced to submit,[3] while striving to conjure the storm by a spasmodic attempt at financial reform.[4]

The deliberations of this Assembly, which met at Paris on the 27th October 1614,[5] are of more than ordinary interest, in view of the fact that it was to be the last meeting of the Estates before 1789, and that many of its demands anticipated those of the National Constituent Assembly. In some respects, indeed, the Parliament of 1614 might be mistaken for the Parliament of 1789. The deliberations reveal the same jealousy and mistrust between the two higher orders and the Third Estate, the same spirit of antagonism between the privileged and the non-privileged classes, the same fear, on the part of the Third Estate, of being controlled by a reactionary combination, the same advocacy by the middle-class representatives of national as distinct from social interests. There are notable differences, of course, and the most notable, perhaps, is the utter impotence of the Third Estate to beat down the opposition either of the higher orders or of the court. Nevertheless, the attitude of the popular deputies has an ominous prophecy of the future in it, and the popular orators of 1789 will only re-echo in some of their noblest passages the patriotism, the sense of human rights vindicated by the popular orators of 1614. To a large extent history is merely a repetition of itself. Otherwise we might have spared ourselves much weary labour in the investigation of the origins of the French Revolution.

The boy king, who had now attained his majority, was made to profess his solemn resolution to execute whatever the national will

[1] For Concini's character, see Mémoires de Richelieu, i. 395-420, and 454-457. See, for instance, Isambert, xvi. 25, for a stringent edict against these seditious writings.

[3] Isambert, xvi. 45-47 (June 1614).

[4] *Ibid.*, xvi. 47-51 : "Édit sur les priviléges en matière de tailles."

[5] *Ibid.*, xvi. 52.

should decree. This concession, which was of course merely complimentary, evoked a shower of tributes of the conventional type to the virtues of the king and his mother, which strangely belied the sulphureous state of public opinion. For the moment it was forgotten that Louis and his mother substantially meant the Marshal D'Ancre and his unworthy minions. Despite which ugly fact, M. de St Pierre, the spokesman of the nobility, discovered in the royal majesty, as represented by the insignificant boy in the marshal's leading strings, a striking resemblance to that of the Godhead! In contrast to this disgusting sycophancy towards the throne, was the insulting tone of the speaker towards the Third Estate, that is the nation, to which he referred with haughty emphasis as "the inferior order." "Let them learn," cried he, "that though we are subjects of the same king, we are not all on an equal footing. They will soon see the difference between them and us; they will also have cause to remember it." This impertinent expression of caste sentiment was deeply resented by the popular representatives, who belonged mostly to the magisterial class, and had the interests of the nation at heart, and both their indignation and their patriotism found noble utterance in the speech of their orator, Jean Savaron. "It is for the people that we labour," cried the speaker, in urging the reduction of taxation and the suppression of the pensions of the nobility, in return for the abolition of the venality of offices and of the *paulette*,[1] to which the Third Estate was ready to consent. "It is for the interest of the king and against our own interests that we do battle." If the nobility were so anxious to reform abuses, let them surrender the pensions which consumed so large a portion of the revenue without any adequate return in the shape of services to the State. Let them show their zeal for reform by a little self-sacrifice, and thus ease the people of the intolerable burden of taxation, squandered for unworthy purposes. Otherwise the people might take the remedy into its own hands, and teach would-be reformers at others' expense a rude lesson in self-abnegation. "History teaches us that the Romans laid such intolerable burdens on the Franks that they at last threw off the yoke. . . . The people is so harassed by taxation, that the same thing is now to be apprehended. God grant that I may prove a false prophet. . . . What would you say, sire," continued he, addressing the king, "if you had seen in the provinces of Guienne and Auvergne men eating herbs after the fashion of the beasts? Would

[1] A tax of a sixtieth of the incomes of magistrates, in virtue of which their offices became hereditary. On the concession of this point by the Third Estate, see Mémoires de Richelieu, i. 222.

not this novelty, this unheard-of misery, produce in your royal mind the desire to forestall the repetition of so great a calamity? Nevertheless, the fact is so well founded, that I shall confiscate to your majesty my office and my property, if I am convicted of a lie." The fact was indisputable, but, as in 1789, privilege and corruption were impervious to the logic of fact, and sought to veil their heartless selfishness by the airs of offended dignity. In response to the demand of a retraction, Savaron disclaimed any intention of giving offence, and testily added that before serving the king as an officer of justice, he had served him in arms, and that he was prepared to answer for his conduct to all the world in both professions. Instead of co-operating in the work of reform, it seemed for a time as if the three orders had met to wrangle over petty questions of etiquette, which might be left in oblivion were it not for the fact that they show the utter incapacity of the States-General at this period for any more effective action than that of a juvenile debating society. The starving peasantry of Auvergne and Guienne might eat herbs for evermore, but the honour of aristocratic gentlemen, who lived at the expense of the peasant, must be vindicated from an aspersion which the books of the treasurer of the exchequer might show to be only too well founded. To put an end to the deadlock and get to work, the Third Estate at last deputed De Mesmes to explain away the offensive language of their spokesman. De Mesmes' well-intentioned oratory only aggravated the irritation it was meant to soothe. He compared the three orders to three brothers, of whom the clergy was the eldest, the nobility the second, the commoners the youngest. Moreover, was it not the young members that often restored the fortunes of the family which the oldest had abased? This might be true, but truth was evidently an unwelcome intruder in such an assembly, and the nobility, more angry than ever, sent a deputation to the king to complain of the insulting metaphor. "The Third Estate has the presumption to compare itself to us," cried their spokesman, the Baron de Senecay. "To what miserable condition are we fallen if this language is true. Not content with calling themselves our brothers, they have the presumption to attribute to themselves the merit of the renovation of the State. Their audacity is insupportable, and therefore, sire, we beg you to put them in their proper places." "To think," growled the deputation on retiring from the royal presence, "that the sons of shoemakers and cobblers call us their brethren! There is as much difference between them and us as between the master and the valet." In 1614, as in 1789, the monarchy mistook its true friends, and sided with the party of birth

and privilege as against the nation. At the instigation of a corrupt court, Louis XIII. commanded the Third Estate to apologise to its superiors.

This dislocation of the orders came out in reference to far graver questions when the Assembly at length left off personal wrangling for more serious debate. In order to avert the danger of civil disorders arising from ecclesiastical pretension and its concomitant spirit of faction and regicide mania, for which France had paid such a terrible price, the Third Estate proposed to recognise the king "as sovereign in his State, holding his crown from God alone," and to enact that "there is no power on earth, spiritual or temporal, that may absolve his subjects from their fidelity and obedience on any pretext whatsoever." This proposition looks like a slavish assertion of the divine right of kings, but such was not the spirit or the intention of its authors. It was merely a measure of national self-defence, in the spirit of the defenders of Gallican liberties, against the votaries of Ultramontanism. The rule of Henry IV. had proved that a strong central authority could alone repress the anarchic forces of religious bigotry and feudal insubordination. His tragic fate had emphasised the danger to religious and civil peace from the doctrines and intrigues of Leaguist bigots and Jesuit zealots, who placed the Pope above and before the king. The democracy of the League and the Jesuits meant the supremacy of the Pope. The supremacy of the Pope meant national enslavement to an alien domination, and might lead to assassination and civil strife, and as between the right of the Pope to nurture sedition and anarchy, and the right of the king to resist and suppress such seditious tactics, the Third Estate did not hesitate to choose the least of two evils, even at the cost of the undue exaltation of the rights of the Crown. The proposition encountered the determined opposition of Cardinal Duperron and the clergy and nobility, who resented the interference of the patriotic deputies as an encroachment on the ecclesiastical power, and denounced it as a dangerous truckling to heresy. The Third Estate contended that it was merely a political measure in the interest of public order, and was supported in its contention by the Parliament, which took the opportunity to pass a decree, confirmative of previous decrees of a similar tenor.[1] In this emergency the regent again came to the rescue of the higher orders by evoking the question to the consideration of the king in council, and quashing both the decree and the remonstrances of the Parliament.[2]

[1] See Isambert, xvi. 56 (2nd January 1615).

[2] See *ibid.*, xvi. 60-75.

The Third Estate was equally unsuccessful in its endeavour to pry into the mysteries of the expenditure of the revenue. How are the public funds employed? was a question to which the taxpayer might be thought to have a right to an answer. So thought the representatives of the taxpayer, and demanded the publication of a budget by Jeannin, the president of the Council of Finance.[1] This was to put the old claim of the States-General to control taxation and expenditure with startling directness, and M. Jeannin was in great trepidation. He was not prepared to put his transactions to the test of honest scrutiny, and invite the obloquy of a revelation which would have shown France what the enforced retirement of Sully had cost it in the wholesale squandering of the sums, extorted from a starving peasantry, among a tribe of greedy place and pension hunters. The aristocratic gentlemen might indignantly scout equality with their plebeian fellow-legislators as an indignity to their honourable persons; some of them who had paid visits to the minister's private room could not claim that "honour" was equivalent to honesty at any rate. M. Jeannin might have been hard put to it to maintain the *régime* of secrecy and corruption, had these gentlemen been clean handed and patriotic enough to give their zealous support to the demand of the Third Estate. The half-hearted adhesion of the two higher orders enabled him to run the risk of meriting the gallows by producing a garbled account of the state of the revenue to a committee of the Estates, and withholding the information necessary to check it. Not till the days of M. Necker, fully a century and a half later, was France to know officially how its revenue was spent. The principle of secrecy was thus left intact as the nurse of future corruption and maladministration, which was to prove a terrible hardship to the people, and contribute to the ultimate ruin of the Bourbon monarchy.

The demand for other reforms of a far-reaching character was not more effective, and their only interest historically lies in the evidence they afford of the reactionary spirit against feudal privilege which anticipated the distant future in a most remarkable degree. The popular deputies would, for instance, have restricted the judicial powers of the nobles over their dependants, would have diminished or abolished the *corvée*, or right of forced labour, would have emancipated the peasant from serfage, would have suppressed the provincial customs as incompatible with national unity and prejudicial to commerce, would have abolished commercial monopolies

[1] On the retirement of Sully the administration of the finances was entrusted to a council. See Bazin, Histoire de France sous Louis XIII., i. 129.

and the oppressive privileges of the trade guilds as detrimental to free trade and free labour. Had even a portion of these and other reforms formulated by the Third Estate been put in operation, the axe would have been laid to the root of a large number of abuses connected with the system of feudal privilege, corporate rights, antiquated customs which retarded social and political progress. Some of these abuses were subsequently abolished or modified; the bulk of them remained to harass the people and nurture the revolutionary spirit. The contentions of the orders, the pseudo-patriotism of the magnates, the impotence springing from narrow class antagonism and rivalry of interests, enabled the government to maintain a corrupt *régime*, and evade the irksome task of responding to the *cahiers* or statements of grievances before the dispersal of the Assembly. On the day after the presentation of these *cahiers* to the king (24th February 1615), the Third Estate found the Convent of the Augustines dismantled, and were informed that the chancellor had forbidden the renewal of their sitting. The announcement evoked angry protests against the indignity to the national representatives. "Are we other than what we were yesterday?" was the indignant question that passed from mouth to mouth. The same question was to find its resolute answer in similar circumstances a hundred and seventy-five years later when the deputies of 1789 found themselves locked out, and met the royal command to disperse with the words "We are to-day what we were yesterday. Let us deliberate." This answer was not possible in 1615, and after an evasive promise of the concession of certain reforms, which was never fulfilled, the disconcerted deputies, who waited in vain for a month for these concessions, betook themselves homeward as empty-handed as they had come. For a century and three-quarters the Estates disappear from the stage of French political life. When we next make their acquaintance, it will be as revolutionary legislators who will not be manœuvred into impotence by government, or checkmated by the privileged classes in the crusade for human rights.[1] In this long interval the Parliament of Paris attributed to itself the *rôle* of critic and opposition, but, as will appear, a body of hereditary

[1] M. Thierry gives an excellent account of this Assembly in chap. viii. of the Essai sur le Tiers État. See also extracts from its proceedings in Isambert, xvi. 52-60. Florimond Rapine wrote a *recueil* of its proceedings; Richelieu recorded his reminiscences in his Mémoires, i. 221-241; the Vicomte d'Avenel has a chapter on the constitution of the Assembly, Richelieu et la Monarchie Absolue, i. 126-141. The Code Michaud, promulgated in January 1629, was partly based on the *cahiers* of 1615.

magistrates was a poor substitute, as a check on absolute government, for a national representative assembly.

The failure of the States-General to remedy the evils of misgovernment and anarchy only intensified them. Condé headed a second rebellion (July 1615–May 1616) against the regent and Concini. He succeeded in gaining the active adhesion of a large section of the Huguenots,[1] led by Rohan and Soubise, who, in spite of the opposition of Du Plessis-Mornay, allowed their apprehensions of an ecclesiastical reaction to seduce them into the fatal policy of mixing up the cause of religious liberty with that of aristocratic egotism. The Peace of Loudun[2] (6th May 1616) effected but a temporary reconciliation. The Huguenots bridled their suspicions, and Condé and his confederates returned to court. Maria de Medici dissimulated her resentment[3] until she could find the opportunity to rid herself of the constant menace of rebellion by throwing its leader into the Bastille. This clever stroke should paralyse the turbulent grandees, and vindicate the royal authority as wielded by Concini. It effected neither. The turbulent grandees refused to submit to a *régime* of favouritism which deprived them of their share of plunder, while the young king eagerly caught at the suggestion of his falconer, De Luynes, to get rid of an arrogant, corrupt adventurer who maintained a suspicious ascendency over his mother and virtually kept him a prisoner in the Louvre. "Now I am king" was the exclamation with which he greeted the news of his assassination by the captain of his bodyguard (24th April 1617). France gained little, however, from the change from the *régime* of the favourite of the mother to that of the favourite of the son. De Luynes, whose chief recommendation was his skill in the difficult art of amusing the boy king, coupled with an aptitude for court cabal, rose to honours superior to those enjoyed by his still more worthless predecessor. He was made Duke and Constable of France, and these unmerited preferments only aggravated aristocratic discontent, in spite of the declaration of amnesty and the promise of royal favour with which the favourite strove to disarm it.[4] The factiousness of these self-seeking magnates appeared in the fact that the former opponents of the queen-mother and her favourite now made common cause with her against the king and De Luynes.

[1] Aumale, Histoire des Princes de Condé, iii. 56-58.

[2] See Isambert, xvi. 83-94.

[3] Mémoires de Bassompièrre, ii. 80: "Elle ne dormoit pas comme je pensois, mais qu'il y avoit certaines choses qu'il falloit que le temps accomodat."

[4] Isambert, xvi. 103-105.

The nation was divided between the party of Maria de Medici, who was kept a virtual prisoner in the Castle of Blois till her escape in 1619,[1] and the party of the court. An assembly of the Notables at Rouen in 1617 proved as impotent as the States-General of 1614-15 to obtain serious consideration for its reforming projects,[2] though its complaints and demands were received with the usual promises of amendment. Louis professed his firm resolution to "reform the State and abolish abuses," but his good intentions were stifled by personal and party contentions. Public opinion became daily more incontrollable, and the booksellers did a brisk trade in party pamphlets and scandalous libels.[3] The supremacy of the Crown was almost as hopelessly prostrate throughout the first decade of Louis' nominal sway as it had been at his father's accession. The first step towards the vindication of that supremacy was the reconciliation of the king and his mother, and, in the man who effected this delicate enterprise, faction found once more a master to teach it with autocratic firmness the virtue of patriotic obedience. The name of Cardinal Richelieu is a potent name in the history of Bourbon absolutism, and Richelieu, who for good and for evil did so much to revive and strengthen the royal authority, now appears on the stage.

Armand du Plessis de Richelieu[4] was destined for the military profession, and entered the Church with no more exalted aim than to retain in his family the revenue of the poor bishopric of Luçon, which his elder brother had abandoned for the monastic life. Armand was only twenty-one years old when, in 1606, he was nominated to this diocese by Henry IV., and was obliged to make a journey to Rome in 1607 in order to obtain the dispensation necessary to admit so youthful a candidate to the episcopal dignity. The young prelate, unlike so many of the aristocratic aspirants to the mitre of his day, distinguished himself by the ardour of his theological studies, and in the same year took his doctor's degree before the Sorbonne with special commendation. He is even said to have evoked the admiration of the court as a preacher, though his pulpit eloquence has left no impression on the memory of contemporary historians. The energy with which he prepared himself for ordination was equalled by his devotion to the discharge of his episcopal functions. Instead of loitering about the court and tasting

[1] Isambert, xvi. 130. [2] *Ibid.*, xvi. 115-117. [3] *Ibid.*, xvi. 117-125.

[4] There is a sketch of Richelieu's early career prefixed to the Lettres, Instructions Diplomatiques, et Papiers d'État de Card. de Richelieu, edited for the Documents Inédits by M. Avenel.

the pleasures of the capital, he retired the following year to his solitary sphere of labour at Luçon, "the poorest and the dingiest diocese in France," as he called it. If we bear in mind the fact that Richelieu dearly loved the magnificence and the refinements of court life, the sacrifice will appear no mean test of an inflexible will. It was not without a struggle that he could accommodate himself to his poorly furnished lodgings, without equipage, plate, tapestry, or the necessary cash to buy them. He was hard put to it to find expedients wherewith to maintain his dignity. The future dictator of France is found bargaining with his relative for the exchange of the hangings of the bed of the late M. de Luçon, of silk and gold, for a Bergamasque canopy, and negotiating the fabrication of a muff from the weasel skins belonging to his uncle the commander.[1] His tunics and other priestly garments are, he complains, in a pitiable state. "We are all beggars in this country," he writes, "and I the chief,"[2] adding in a later communication to the same correspondent in reference to his poverty, "You may judge from this of the misery of a poor monk, reduced to sell his furniture and to live the life of a rustic." One can hardly avoid a suspicion that in thus expatiating on his self-denial, he was anxious that the world should know it, was, in fact, busy making a reputation, of which the court should take note for his future advantage. He had not long to wait for the desired effect, and learned with huge satisfaction that no less a personage than Cardinal Duperron had formed a high opinion of his assiduity. He certainly laboured hard to reform his diocese, and his devotion to duty, his tolerant charity won him the respect of the Protestants as well as of his flock. The latent genius of the poor bishop in shabby genteel was, however, not allowed to go to sleep over the routine of his episcopal functions, and the death of Henry IV. was followed by frequent visits to the capital in the hope of gaining influence in the State as well as the Church. His reputation as an active ecclesiastic was augmented by the prominent part he took in the debates of the States-General of 1614-15. His brethren showed their estimate of his abilities and his orthodox zeal by choosing him as their spokesman on presenting their *cahier* to the king in February 1615. His speech was an able exposition of the Ultramontanist tendencies of the majority of his order, which the all powerful minister of State was erelong to belie in his conflict with ecclesiastical intolerance and pretension. More important still, he succeeded in gaining the goodwill of Maria de Medici and Concini. His diocese henceforth saw but little of him. In 1616 he became

[1] Lettres, i. 24. [2] *Ibid.*, i. 28.

Councillor of State, and before the end of the year, Grand Almoner of Louis' young queen, and secretary for war and foreign affairs. In his capacity of secretary, the future organiser of the crusade against the Habsburg is seen ostensibly forming the Franco-Spanish Alliance which reversed for a time the policy of Henry IV. Richelieu was as yet merely feeling his way to power, and paying for the privilege of establishing his influence by seeming to follow, rather than direct the policy of the court. The energy of his administration and the firm tone of his despatches[1] during his five months' term of office (November 1616–April 1617) are the only indications of the master mind in the future direction of both the foreign and the internal affairs of France. The assassination of Concini was followed by the resignation of his secretaryship and his seat in the Council, and seemed a fatal blow to his ambition. He retired to his poverty-stricken bishopric[2] to write polemical and systematic theology,[3] while eagerly watching for the revolution of the political wheel that was to renew his administrative career without further break for eighteen years. He was by no means so indifferent, or so inactive as he professed himself to be, and the suspicion of his secret relations with his former patroness at Blois brought upon him a twelve months' exile to Avignon.[4] He strove to disarm this suspicion by the appearance of the most complete abstraction from the affairs of this world. He seemed dead to all business but that of meditation and theological composition. In reality he was watching the evolution of events with the utmost alertness in order to be able to surprise opportunity and regain favour and power. The flight of the queen-mother from Blois proved to be the turn of the tide. In this emergency, Luynes, apprehensive of the renewal of civil war, bethought him of the abstracted exile at Avignon. Richelieu should interpose to reconcile mother and son,[5] and save both France and the Constable from the menace of armed faction. His mediation did not prevent an appeal to arms by both sides, in which the king had the best of it, but he ultimately succeeded in putting an end to the unseemly strife and restoring harmonious relations between the queen and her son.[6] His success restored his credit, and once more opened the Council of State to the lucky prelate, who was to show that his proper *rôle* was not that of writing works of edification or controversy in the seclusion of his cell at Avignon, or of administering a small diocese, but of ruling a great State and mightily influencing both its destiny and that of Europe.

[1] They are given in the Lettres, i. 197-532.
[2] Mémoires de Richelieu, i. 467.
[3] *Ibid.*, i. 472, 473.
[4] *Ibid.*, i. 498, 499.
[5] *Ibid.*, i. 533.
[6] *Ibid.*, ii. 94, 95.

His recall to the council board was preceded by the gift of the red hat in 1622, and followed by his installation as prime minister in 1624[1] (29th April). Two and a half years later (October 1626) he was appointed Grand Master and Superintendent of Marine,[2] and shortly after, the offices of Constable and Admiral of France were suppressed in his favour.[3]

The situation with which Richelieu grappled as prime minister was one that would have unnerved any man not gifted with extraordinary powers of mind and will. Religious and political faction had undermined the fabric of political order and material prosperity which Henry IV. and Sully had so laboriously built up. The national unity was threatened by the misused political power of the Huguenots, the authority of the Crown defied by the magnates, the Crown itself degraded by the vile *régime* of favouritism and corruption. Civil war in the interest of political, personal, and party aims demoralised and disorganised all the forces of a healthy national life. Richelieu has himself described the situation, and has not exaggerated the difficulties with which his statesmanship had to contend. "When your majesty resolved to open to me his Council and at the same time to commit to me the direction of his affairs, I can truly say that the Huguenots divided the State with him, that the magnates comported themselves as if they were not his subjects, and the most powerful governors of provinces as if they were sovereigns in their charges. Their evil example was so prejudicial to this kingdom that even the most loyal of the Parliaments were influenced by their lawlessness, and diminished your authority as much as possible in certain matters in order to augment their own beyond reasonable bounds. Everybody measured his merit by his audacity, and the greater the benefits received, the greater the presumption of ill-regulated imaginations. The most enterprising were esteemed the most prudent, and often found themselves the most fortunate. Your alliances with foreign States were despised; particular interests were preferred to the public advantage; in a word, the dignity of the royal majesty was abused to such a degree by those who presided over your affairs, that it was almost unrecognisable. . . . In spite of the difficulties of the situation . . . I had the hardihood (knowing how much a king can effect when he uses his power well) to promise your majesty the re-establishment of the State. . . . I promised to employ all my energy and all the authority which it might please your majesty to repose in me to ruin the Huguenot party, to abase the pride of the magnates, to reduce all your subjects to their duty, and

[1] Lettres. ii. 1. [2] Isambert. xvi. 104. [3] *Ibid.*, xvi. 108 (January 1627).

to elevate your name among foreign nations to the point at which it ought to be. . . . The success resulting from the good intentions which it has pleased God to give me for the government of this State will justify to the ages to come the firmness with which I have constantly pursued this design."[1]

This short paragraph is an epitome of Richelieu's history as prime minister, the summary of one of the most important chapters of French history as well. One difficulty, however, he has omitted to mention—the primary difficulty, perhaps—which presented itself in the character of the king. Louis was the antithesis of his father in almost every respect. It was difficult to recognise in the backward, melancholy, mistrustful, severely moral young king, the son of the genial, dissipated, sympathetic, strong-minded Henry IV. The only point of resemblance between them lies in the fearlessness which both displayed on the field of battle. Otherwise, Louis' tastes lay towards hawking, history, music, poetry, and he only felt at ease in the intimate society of those who shared his simple pleasures. He was essentially, for a king, a small man, without force of individuality, without much ability, without largeness of conception or fertility of initiative, without strength of purpose or will of his own. Nevertheless, though but a small man and a mediocre king, it was dangerous to ignore or contradict him; and it required all Richelieu's suppleness and ingenuity to manage this insignificant young man on the throne. His most exacting task, his greatest diplomatic achievement, perhaps, was his successful study of this same insignificant young man. It is amusing to note how artfully, in the "Testament Politique," he ascribes to him all his political triumphs, though he cannot resist the temptation to drop an occasional hint of the greatness of his own merits. If we did not know Louis XIII. from other sources, we should be inclined to infer, from the obsequious style of many of the cardinal's State papers, that he was a man in whom all the virtues and all the rare qualities of human excellence were combined.[2] It is a strange spectacle to see such a mind so often reduced to the necessity of using all sorts of petty arts in order to maintain the hold of power. Power was for Richelieu the supreme passion, and to gratify this passion he was prepared to pay a heavier price in self-abasement than a man of more robust views of self-respect would

[1] Testament Politique de Richelieu (Amsterdam, 1688), 5-8. The first chapter is entitled, "Succinte Narration de toutes les grandes Actions du Roi," and was indubitably written by the cardinal himself. The best edition of the Testament Politique is that of M. Foncemagne, published in 1764.

[2] See, for instance, Lettres, ii. 32-34.

have consented to pay. And the king was only one of many who had to be nursed into docility or subordination to the supreme will of the dictator in disguise. He had to nurse in addition two queens —the mother and the wife,—the king's brother, the Duke of Orleans, the princes and courtiers, besides the smaller fry of intrigue that haunt a royal palace.[1] With these he could adopt drastic methods, should diplomacy fail, as it erelong did, provided he could manipulate the king. Happily Louis, like all weak men, was easily influenced, and his incapacity was the string that Richelieu knew how to pull with unfailing correctness of judgment. In all his actions the minister is ostensibly the mere instrument of the king's will; in reality the king is the mere instrument of the minister's genius. Moreover, he strove to keep up the illusion in the eyes of the people as well as of the king, to present him in the most favourable light to the nation, to win for him its respect and its affection, and thus rehabilitate the royal power by popularising it. For Richelieu the absolute monarchy is the indispensable condition, both of his own power and the glory and well-being of France, and therefore the monarch is invested with all the strength of his own masterly will as well as with the attributes of unlimited sovereignty. In so doing he was acting, it is only fair to admit, the part of the patriot as well as the courtier. "The good success of the royal affairs," he told a deputation that came to offer him their congratulations, "is much more due to the king's prudence and his care for the welfare of his people than to the counsel of his servants."[2] "As for me, if I merit any praise, it is for having faithfully executed the commands of the king and constantly followed his intentions."[3] "The only glory to which I aspire in this world is to serve under so great and glorious a prince."[4] If the merit of Louis is purposely exaggerated, the sincerity of the minister's devotion is indubitable. "I desire your glory more than ever any servant that of his master,"[5] was the exclamation with which he addressed Louis on the morrow of the Day of Dupes. There may be a smack of servility in this habitual self-abasement before the majesty of so small a man; there is no hypocrisy. Richelieu was created for his *rôle*, a *rôle* fitted for the mind to which power is the all in all of existence. Pity only that he did not cherish the same passionate devotion to the well-being of the people, and viewed the State too exclusively from the standpoint of the throne and himself. Yet he could indulge in plain speaking on occasion, even to the king, if only by way of tonic to an appetite

[1] See Mémoires de Richelieu, vi. 425-426.
[2] Lettres, iii. 160. [3] *Ibid.*, iii. 162. [4] *Ibid.*, iii. 167. [5] *Ibid.*, iv. 12.

satiated with flattery, and, when he felt sure of his ground, would at times offer his resignation.[1] While everything is publicly ascribed to God and His anointed, Louis is privately admonished that he is but a human being after all. He warned him against the jealous, fickle, suspicious disposition which made him easily susceptible to prejudice, against his tendency to yield to momentary impressions and aversions, against his innate dislike for business, against niggardliness, or mistaken leniency in the punishment of crimes against the State. "Kings being the true images of God in this respect, that all benefits ought to be derived from the throne, let the king practise a wise liberality. Such liberality, by winning him the hearts of the people, is the best interest he can get for his money."[2] In the matter of finding means to ends his shrewdness is unfailing. He is master of the situation because he knows how to study it. His system of government may be wanting in elevation, may be accused of egotism, because government is regarded too exclusively from the standpoint of the interests of king and minister. It is very practical, at any rate. The secret of successful government consists "in seizing the occasion most apt for the realisation of the desired end."[3] For the sake of this end Louis must be content to overlook much, but he must never be wanting in foresight. "Experience teaches us that if we do not foresee from afar the ends in view, we shall come short of their execution."[4] "Play the fool who will, I shan't,"[5] is the constant maxim of his statesmanship. He had the consciousness of his powers, and the self-confidence, if not always the self-respect, which these inspired. If he could fawn and cringe in the royal cabinet, he knew the value of pose outside it, and could play the imperious master towards opponents. His red hat was a host in itself. He asserted his rank as cardinal in order to increase his authority as minister, and, in virtue thereof, claimed precedence in the Council of State, not only over constable and chancellor, but over the princes of the blood.[6] No minister was ever more sensitive of the honours of his position. He was a very stickler for points of ceremony. The English ambassador refused to pay him a visit unless the cardinal first waited on him. In order to solve the tremendous problem, Richelieu feigned illness, and forced the ambassador to pay him his respects in his bed![7] This skirmish is characteristic. It is not a mere affair of personal dignity or vanity, though Richelieu

[1] See, for instance, Mémoires de Richelieu, v. 54.
[2] See the interesting memoir in Lettres, iii. 179-21
[3] Lettres, ii. 97. [4] *Ibid.*, ii. 562; cf. Mémoires, vii. 269.
[5] *Ibid.*, ii. 651. [6] *Ibid.*, ii. 6-12. [7] *Ibid.*, ii. 61, 62.

was both haughty and vain. In his eyes the greatness of the minister is identical with that of the State. In other eyes the arrogance of the man would only seem the more unconscionable in consequence.

At his *début* Richelieu cherished a high ideal of achievement. "The intention of the king," he told an assembly of the Notables in December 1626, "is so to rule that his kingdom may equal and even surpass the best of past times, and serve as an example and model of those to come."[1] He began his career as an ardent reformer. In 1625 he submitted to the king a programme of reforms which would have done credit to the most enlightened leaders of the States-General, and embraced the Church as well as the State. In the Church he would maintain discipline by the holding of provincial councils, and by the enforced residence of the bishops in their dioceses, would promote capable ecclesiastics, reform the monasteries and reduce their number, establish hospitals, and increase the number of seminaries for the better education of the priesthood. In financial matters he took Sully for his model. He would "purge the provinces" by means of a chamber of justice, reduce expenditure, save six millions by the repurchase of the domain, suppress many useless offices, diminish the number of court officials who enjoyed exemption from the *tailles*, lighten the oppressive burdens of the people. He would purify the administration of justice by the abolition of the *paulette*, or *droit annuel*, and the purchase of judicial offices, etc. etc.[2] On this memorandum was based the *Réglement pour toutes les affaires du Royaume*, or regulation for the general advantage of the kingdom.[3] The Notables, if not the States-General, should set the national seal to the work of reformation which Richelieu was all impatience to begin. Only let them not waste time in vain debate. "Few words and many effects," is the best way to express good intentions, he reminds them; "execution, not decrees, is the main thing."[4] But execution of reforms of this sort was not Richelieu's strong point. He was no Sully, and even if he had possessed Sully's administrative genius, the political exigencies of the time would not have given his reform scheme a fair chance of success. "The golden age on paper" is the caustic comment of an unsympathetic critic.[5] France was not indebted to Richelieu for great achievements of philanthropic statesmanship such as we have seen under some of its best kings and its truly great administrators. He had work of another kind to do, work for which he was specially fitted, part of it

[1] Lettres, ii. 299.
[2] See the Memorandum in Lettres, ii. 159-162.
[3] Lettres, ii. 168-183.
[4] *Ibid.*, ii. 303.
[5] Michelet, Histoire de France, xi. 405.

good work in its way. We have clearly learned, in his own words what that work was. He strengthened the monarchy, he struck down faction, he increased the prestige and power of France. In a certain sense he was a reformer, he certainly accomplished some extraordinary changes. Whether they were permanently beneficial to France is another question. Before we judge let us first recount, as briefly as possible, what he did accomplish.

"*It* is necessary," said Richelieu, "to ruin the Huguenots."[1] This conclusion, which sounds brutal enough, was not the outcome of a narrow bigotry, but of political considerations. Though he had, as Bishop of Luçon, entered the controversial lists against the Huguenots, he had no desire, as minister, to head an intolerant crusade against the Edict of Nantes. The statesman and the prelate were two different men. "Provided they preserve their allegiance," he wrote, after his advent as prime minister, "they will always be well treated. Let none do them evil, but only prevent them from doing evil."[2] Unfortunately, the Huguenots did not discriminate the statesman from the prelate. They had some excuse for their scepticism, not only in view of the controversial zeal of the Bishop of Luçon, but of the local persecution to which they were subjected. Catholic bigotry, as represented by the Cardinal Berulle and the Jesuits, was sufficiently provocative to rouse their suspicions and their restiveness. The fact may palliate, but it does not justify their recourse to arms at every local whiff of persecution, as long, at least, as the Edict of Nantes formed part of the statute-book. This rebellious restiveness was aroused as much by the spirit of faction as by religious susceptibility. The wiser and more patriotic of their leaders—Sully and Du Plessis-Mornay[3]—strove in vain to contain their factious spirit, to subordinate the political to the religious party. Under the leadership of the brothers Rohan and Soubise the ecclesiastical was more and more lost in the political and military organisation, became more and more a menace to political order Nay, as the embodiment of the idea of a State within the State, i was at the same time a serious menace to national unity.[4] Rohar was a man of high character and an able general,[5] but he was an impossible patriot. The right to negotiate, sword in hand, with the central authority, to formulate ultimatums to the king, to

[1] Lettres, ii. 648. [2] *Ibid.*, ii. 391.

[3] Mémoires de Madame Mornay, ii., Guizot's Introduction, 23.

[4] See Mémoires de Richelieu, ii. 139, 140, where the cardinal exposes the political character and danger of the Huguenot organisation.

[5] Histoire des Princes de Condé, iii. 225, 226.

maintain an armed force for aggressive purposes, to hold general assemblies for the debate of political questions which ignored the interests of France, to call in, for party purposes, the aid of hostile powers, meant for Richelieu the ultimate disorganisation of the State. It was offensive to his autocratic genius, it hampered him in his plans for the establishment of political order, it was incompatible with his plans of foreign policy, it was certainly detrimental to patriotism, except of the anarchic stamp. It has been contended that he might and should have attempted to disarm the Huguenots by making friends instead of enemies of them,[1] should have turned their armed force to account against the Spaniard. They would have been at the best but dangerous friends, with the power to appeal to the sword when it suited them, and their distrust of the cardinal made accommodation not so feasible as those who know better have thought. And with the Huguenots in arms, Richelieu felt that his patriotic schemes, his autocratic ideal, were impossible. "It is necessary, therefore, to ruin the Huguenots."

They had been concerned more or less, as we have seen, in the seditious tactics of Condé,[2] and about the time that Richelieu returned to the Council of State (1621) their restiveness had broken into revolt, which the Peace of Montpellier in the following year only temporarily checked.[3] In the year following his advent to the supreme direction of affairs, the Duke of Rohan and his brother Soubise, hoping to force the minister to concede their demands, again threw down the gauntlet. From their centre at La Rochelle the Huguenots held command of the sea, while a few small ships represented the whole of Louis' navy at this period.[4] Richelieu met the emergency by borrowing ships from England and Holland,[5] and thus made use of a Protestant fleet to crush a Protestant revolt and enable him to impose terms intended to make a repetition of rebellion less easy (February 1626).[6] His hope was disappointed.

The following year Rohan was once more on the warpath, and this time the rebellion was complicated by a rupture with England, and by court cabals against the minister.[7] The madcap policy of

[1] Michelet, Histoire de France, xi. 461.

[2] See Isambert, xvi. 88.

[3] *Ibid.*, xvi. 140, 141; cf. 144, where the Edict of Nantes is confirmed.

[4] In a letter written in January 1625 Richelieu speaks of the effort to arm fourteen vessels, of 400 tons each, as a notable feat (Lettres, ii. 63, 64).

[5] Testament Politique—Succinte Narration, 9, 10; cf. Mémoires de Richelieu, ii. 417, 432, 433.

[6] Isambert, xvi. 191; Mémoires de Richelieu, iii. 14, 15.

[7] Succinte Narration, 12.

Buckingham[1] dragged England into a struggle from which it reaped only disgrace, and its Huguenot allies complete defeat. The showy but superficial courtier did not shine as admiral or general, and was compelled to retire from the island of Rhé with the stigma of defeat and failure (November 1627). He had succeeded, however, in involving the Huguenots in the odium of revolt, in alliance with the hereditary enemy, and Richelieu made preparations on a grander scale for a struggle which he was determined should be final. He gathered a powerful army around La Rochelle, and profiting by his early military education, assumed the direction of the siege himself, with the title of lieutenant-general. He developed as much energy and inflexibility as Buckingham had shown incapacity and pusillanimity. It was a question of success or ruin, for the Rochellese were not his only enemies. The court was seething with hostile intrigues; the king himself was as yet an uncertain quantity; failure would mean the wreck of his political career, anarchy, and possible disintegration of France. The whole strength of the man was, therefore, thrown into the struggle, and the master mind never appeared more dominant in the face of difficulty and responsibility. Engineer, general, diplomatist, minister, director of commissariat—the quondam Bishop of Luçon appears as to the manner born in all these *rôles*, equally in his element in writing memoranda for the conduct of operations, or unravelling a knotty diplomatic problem, or inditing a pastoral epistle. Whatever may be lacking in Richelieu, versatility of genius is not. In this respect he is almost Napoleonic. He owed something, no doubt, to his lieutenants, some of them prelates like himself, survivals of the mediæval fighting bishop, whose martial fervour was inspired by his example and whetted by the thought of a holy war. Clearly, therefore, La Rochelle and the political existence of the Huguenots were doomed in spite of long, heroic resistance. With his lines of circumvallation, his mole across the channel of the Loire, his squadrons within and without, his forts and his batteries, he persistently held the doomed city in his deadly vice for fully a year. Two attempts by an English squadron to force the impenetrable barrier that shut off ingress from the sea failed. The horrors of famine at last compelled the heroic defenders to capitulate on the 30th October 1628, in virtue of an assurance of amnesty and liberty of worship. Richelieu deemed it sufficiently punished by the loss of all its rights and privileges and the demolition of

[1] The story of Buckingham's gallantries towards the French queen, which are asserted to have helped to bring about the rupture, is a mere supposition of historians, and lacks the confirmation of official documents; see Lettres, ii. 44, 45.

its fortifications.[1] The submission of Rohan and the rebels of Languedoc, six months later, completed the ruin of the political power of the Huguenots (Peace of Alais, June 1629[2]). With the demolition of the fortifications of Montauban and other Huguenot strongholds, the menace of religious strife to political order and national unity ceased. "Now," said Richelieu,[3] "the roots of heresy, rebellion, disorder, and civil war, which have exhausted France, are dried up." If the political party experienced his inflexibility, the sect had reason to praise his moderation. He had no desire to gratify the bigots and transform a war in defence of the authority of the Crown into an intolerant crusade. The reduction of La Rochelle might be celebrated as a great triumph for the Church; in reality it was a great blow to the ideal of an intolerant Catholic predominance which Philip II. had bequeathed to Spain and Austria. The suppression of the Huguenot faction set Richelieu free to pursue the scheme of Philip's great opponent, Henry IV.—the abasement of the Spanish-Habsburg power even at the cost of championing Protestantism abroad. The bigots at home might murmur and intrigue, but Richelieu knew, as we shall see, how to silence their murmurs and outwit their intrigues. "Let us forget the past," he exhorted, "and think only of the future."[4] He would not even sanction reprisals. When Louis broke into Privas, the stronghold of the Protestants of Vivarais, Richelieu thanked God that "he had not been present at this butchery." Instead of anticipating the dragonnades of a later time, he persuaded the vindictive king to grant an amnesty and guarantee the Edict of Nantes. Doubtless in ruining the political power of the Huguenots, and vindicating the supremacy of the Crown and the unity of the nation, he was at the same time dealing a blow at political freedom. Autocracy as well as royalty and nationality triumphed in their discomfiture. But political freedom, as associated with disloyalty to France and loyalty to faction, had certainly not proved an unmixed blessing these three-quarters of a century, whether championed by Catholics or Protestants. For the present, the coercion of disorder was the main thing. Nor would it be fair to Richelieu to say that the ruin of the political power of the Huguenots was the preliminary of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. If he sacrificed political, he respected

[1] Isambert, xvi. 223. For the siege of La Rochelle see Mémoires de Richelieu, iv. 1-176.

[2] Histoire des Princes de Condé, iii. 220-224; Mémoires de Richelieu, iv. 476.

[3] Lettres, iii. 164.

[4] *Ibid.*, iii. 166.

religious liberty. He was not the man to become the tool of the Jesuits and the bigots, and he cannot be held responsible for Louis XIV. The immediate sequel justified his policy, and if intolerance ultimately ruined it, the fault was not his. The Huguenots became the most orderly and industrious of French citizens. Mazarin found in this fact the best proof of its utility. "I have no reason to complain of the little flock," said he, twenty years later, when threatened by a formidable reaction against the system of his predecessor; "if it browses in bad pastures, it does not go astray at any rate."

The struggle with the Huguenots ended, there remained the struggle with the magnates before he could give his whole strength to the realisation of his projects of internal government and foreign policy. Hostile intrigues had dogged and thwarted him at every step from the moment that his personality made itself felt in the direction of affairs. The magnates hated the man, they dreaded his autocratic system. Opposition to his foreign policy, which was hostile to the aims of the Spanish party, added strength to the bitter opposition to the man and the system. The two queens, Maria de Medici and Anne of Austria, formerly his patronesses, as the champions of Spain, bore him deadly enmity. Louis' brother, the contemptible Gaston, Duke of Orleans, was his sworn foe. Guise, Épernon, Elbœuf, and other powerful governors of provinces, resented the authority of the upstart nobleman who presumed to limit theirs. The host of candidates for high places were offended by the arrogance that would not consent to consider their claims, far less to share the direction of the State with them. Finally, the intrigues of the tribe of political women—happily for the cardinal, no mistresses among them—had always to be discounted at the French court. Whatever the motives of opposition, Richelieu regarded all and sundry who would not bow to his ministerial sceptre as personal enemies to be relentlessly crushed. Nay, in his eyes, his personal enemies were also the enemies of the State. "I have no enemies but those of the State." The man and the system were one. It is Richelieu, or nothing. There is room but for one will, one ruler, in the State. The king is an illusion, which Richelieu, as we have seen, skilfully keeps up: the minister is the government. It is his business to rule, of all else to submit to his sway. There was egotism in this, colossal egotism, and this egotism was offensive, because arrogant and despotic. Richelieu could appreciate and reward subordination and submission; he could sometimes submit to hear the other side of the question and take advice, especially from Mathieu Molé. He hated independence: he

could not understand or brook opposition. This was not generous, and generosity to opponents, like M. Toiras, for example, who refused to submit, was alien to his cold egotism. The character of the man made opposition inevitable, and this opposition might be the expression of a healthy individuality and public spirit. To a certain extent, indeed, the opposition of the magnates was opposition to the minister, not to the monarch. "Pour le roy, contre le cardinal" ("For the king, against the cardinal") was the inscription traced by the Count of Soissons on his banners at the combat of Marfée (1641), where he fell fighting against the cardinal rather than the king. The only question is, What significance did the count attach to this device? Was it that of the feudal magnate, or the modern subject? Did it mean allegiance to a king who would sacrifice the people to the magnates, the State to the individual? Was it the expression of faction, or of patriotism? Had a Soissons, a Guise, an Épernon, eschewed the factious and egotistic tactics and views by which their predecessors had signalised their liberal sentiments under a weak monarch or a weak regent? Viewed in the light of events so recent as the interregnum of Maria de Medici, such professions of loyalty are certainly open to criticism. There is no doubt, at any rate, what would have been the meaning of it for France. It would not have meant the emancipation of the people from the burden of feudal privilege, or the better government of the State. For both people and State it would have meant the retrogression to feudal factiousness, civil strife, corruption, anarchy. Richelieu might be arrogant and despotic, his system might tend to the centralisation of power at the expense of liberty and political self-development, but as against the feudal magnate, whose *régime* meant faction and misgovernment, it was favourable, at any rate, to political order. It might be Richelieu or nothing, but, in the main, Richelieu or nothing meant Richelieu and France. Substantially the dead set against the power of the minister was at the same time a dead set against the power of the Crown. It is the old play of feudal insubordination over again, and as against the evils of feudal insubordination, the power of the Crown in the hands of a strong and patriotic minister, is still, at this stage in the history of France, the only remedy. The autocratic system is preferable to aristocratic anarchy. Moreover, the power of Richelieu meant a policy of toleration at home, antagonism abroad to Spanish predominance and bigotry, whilst his opponents at court would have thirled France to intolerance at home, and a crusade against liberty and Protestantism abroad.

Most of these opponents were contemptible enough in themselves,

petty rivals for place and power, tools of intriguing women, but their rank and influence made them very formidable to a man whose genius was his only claim to rule, and the struggle taxed his strength to the utmost, as long as the fickle king remained a variable factor. It began in 1626, when the conspiracy of Ornano and Chalais, the tools of Orleans and the Duchess of Chevreuse, threatened to nip his career in the bud by assassination. The climax came in 1630, when the intrigues of Maria de Medici, Anne of Austria, and the Duke of Orleans, culminated in the fiasco of the Day of Dupes. Calumny played an important part in these intrigues, for to shake off Richelieu it was necessary to poison the mind of the king. Had he not got rid of the Cardinal de Berulle by poison the year before?[1] Was he not scheming to marry his niece to the Count of Soissons, and raise him to the throne? Calumny just missed success. Louis hesitated a moment between the passionate importunities and reproaches of his mother, and his faith in his minister's integrity. The news of his fall was already despatched from Paris to foreign courts, and Richelieu had ordered his carriage to carry him into retirement, when a messenger summoned him to Versailles. The interview with the fugitive king turned the premature triumph of the queen into discomfiture, and confirmed the power of the hated minister beyond further cavil (11th November 1630).[2] The great *coup* ended in the flight of Maria and Orleans, instead of that of the cardinal. The queen-mother never returned to renew the struggle, and the contemptible Gaston disgraced himself by his petty attempt at rebellion, and ceased to be formidable even as the figurehead of opposition. Against those below royal rank who had been concerned in this intrigue, or took part in the rebellion that sprang from it, Richelieu knew no mercy. Terror was the buttress of his power. In this respect he is Louis XI. come to life again,—not a noble figure certainly. The block and the Bastille, proscription and commissions of justice were the expedients of his vengeance. Marshal Marillac and the Duke of Montmorency[3] were sent to the scaffold as Chalais had been, as Cinq Mars and De Thou after them. The ruthless despot tracked the magnates even to their feudal lairs; his terrible hand struck through thick mediæval walls, rased the fortifications of their feudal castles to the ground. He would have been a greater man if he had been just as well as inexorable. Unfortunately he sullied his

[1] Richelieu warmly rebutted this lie, which was fathered by Orleans, and noised against him at Rome. See Lettres, iii. 458.

[2] For Richelieu's account of this affair see Mémoires, vi. 427-432.

[3] Isambert, xvi. 370-374 and 376-378.

memory by adding injustice to rigour. He was as arbitrary in his methods of vengeance as he was autocratic in his methods of government. The trial of Marillac, for instance, by a special commission consisting of his personal enemies, was an atrocious travesty of justice. The Parliament protested in vain against these arbitrary methods. To condemn, even by special commission, was, it insisted, to abuse the royal authority and render it odious, to prostitute justice to the dictates of individual vengeance.[1] Richelieu paid no heed to the remonstrances of the Parliament, and Louis gave way, in this as in other matters, to his all-powerful prompting, as the following characteristic episode shows. The scene is St Germain, where a special commission is sitting in 1639 to try the Duke de la Valette, who was accused of incapacity in the conduct of the operations in northern Spain. With this commission the presidents of the Parliament of Paris, Novion and Bellièvre, and Pinon, the dean of the Grand Chamber, were associated. A report of the proceedings having been read, Louis demanded the opinion of the representatives of the Parliament. "Sire," replied Pinon, "I have served fifty years in your Parliament, and have never had experience of affairs of this kind. M. de la Valette is a peer of France. I beseech you to remit the matter to the Parliament." "Give your opinion," brusquely answered the king. "I am of opinion that the case should be sent to the Parliament for judgment," returned Pinon. "That is against my will," retorted Louis, "and, besides, it is not to give an opinion." "Sire," was the reply, "to advise a remit is to give a legitimate opinion." "Give your opinion this instant," angrily burst out the king, "or I shall know what to do." Pinon did not hazard further resistance. Bellièvre showed more spirit. "It is a strange thing for a king to interfere in a criminal trial. . . . It is incompatible with the royal majesty." "Give your opinion at once," ordered Louis. "Sire," was the retort, "I have no other opinion to give." La Valette was nevertheless executed in effigy.[2] An implacable mind that can make use of unlimited power in the punishment even of crime, was certainly a questionable boon at times.

The administration of Richelieu displays the same feature of subordination to the will of the minister. In his capacity of "principal minister of State," he recognises no equal, far less any rival. His imperious personality is not only the mainspring of government, it is the government. Opposition to the prime minister, on the part of

[1] Isambert, xvi. 369.

[2] St Aulaire, Histoire de la Fronde, Introduction, 25; and Isambert, xvi. 506-508.

the magnates, is conspiracy against the State, on the part of any member of the official hierarchy it is breach of duty, infidelity to the king. No minister had ever exercised such despotic power in France. There had been kings before Louis XIII. who claimed and wielded absolute power, but no king had previously invested a single will with what was practically unlimited authority. Neither George of Amboise nor Sully, to go no further back, had been without rivals who shared to some extent the royal confidence and favour. Richelieu, though inferior in administrative ability to either of them, wielded a superior authority. After the Day of Dupes the minister was substantially the State. And this authority he employed to intensify the system of centralisation which had grown with the royal power, and which reached its climax in the next reign. It is due to this fact, rather than for any signal service rendered to the people, that his internal administration acquired a far-reaching historical significance. Under his auspices, the Council of State possessed neither independence nor power of initiative. It was not a body of representative opinion applied to the work of government, as its title seemed to imply. It was merely the instrument of the cardinal's will, "an assembly of clerks directed by a few industrious and submissive jurists,"[1] whose numbers he reduced in order to render it more manageable. As to the secretaries of State, their functions were literally secretarial. They wrote State papers at the cardinal's dictation, or under his direction; they had no consultative voice or independent departmental authority in matters of internal or foreign policy. The only individual who, in his secretarial capacity, was permitted to exercise a personal influence on affairs of State, especially on those of foreign policy, was the Père Joseph, the cardinal's *alter ego*.[2] Otherwise, he was emphatically in himself what we nowadays term the government. The post of superintendent of finance was indeed one of great personal responsibility, over which Richelieu did not exercise the same direct control as in the case of the secretaries of State, but he took care to fill it with men who were subservient, if incapable or corrupt, and could therefore afford to leave its nominal power intact. In the provinces he maintained the same firm grip of all departments of administration through his

[1] "Ce qu'il créa, s'il créa quelque chose, c'est un conseil docile, sans autorité, sinon sans valeur, une assemblée de commis, conduite par quelques jurisconsultes laborieux et soumis" (Avenel, Richelieu et la Monarchie Absolue, i. 43).

[2] Richelieu himself frankly admits this, and he was certainly indebted to Father Joseph for much good advice and help in his negotiations. "Il partage avec moy le maniement des affaires" (Lettres, ii. 2). See also Le Père Joseph et Richelieu, by G. Fagniez.

intendants.[1] The office was not new, but Richelieu made it permanent, extended it to the whole kingdom, and enhanced its powers. While the intendants did not displace the provincial governors, they absorbed the administration of justice, police, and finance, and those governors who resented the encroachments of the central authority, such as the Dukes of Bellegarde, Elbœuf, and Guise, were remorselessly dismissed in favour of more willing tools.[2] Similarly the representatives of the government depressed the powers of the Provincial Estates in the interest of the system of centralisation, whose aim was to absorb all local authority in the bureaucracy.

The bureaucracy was doubtless a serviceable instrument of the maintenance of political order, and the nation, if not the magnates, was not averse to a system which tended to protect it from the local tyranny of provincial governors and their corrupt subordinates. The nation, if we may judge from the *cahier* of the Third Estate of 1615, was heartily tired of faction, intrigue, and rebellion, and desired their effective suppression. In tightening the reins of authority, Richelieu may, therefore, be allowed the credit of realising a national aspiration. He certainly lent a new vitality to the absolutism of the Crown by infusing into it the strength of his own imperious personality. Bureaucracy is one of the pillars of autocracy. Moreover, he gave a trend to French history, which even the Revolution did not efface, and which Napoleon as well as Louis XIV. was to intensify. But while his bureaucratic system consolidated order, and thus served a practical end of the first importance in view of the necessities of the time, it is questionable whether, as a system, it was a step in the direction of progress, whether it served the highest interests of the nation. Political order by means of centralisation is good, if anarchy is the only alternative, but political order united to political self-development is better. Bureaucratic centralisation tends to keep a people in tutelage, to weaken public spirit, and in the long run to enervate the nation by neglecting its political development. To Richelieu the individual will is everything, the co-operative will nothing in government and politics. The tendency of modern history, on the other hand, has gone to show that the nation that has learned to govern itself is the best governed nation, popular government, chastened by experience and guided by high character, the ideal system. Such a nation, such a State does not stand in need of

[1] For the edict creating the office of intendant, May 1635, see Isambert, xvi. 442-445.

[2] See, for instance, Succinte Narration, p. 30.

revolutions to rectify the errors, or undo the crimes of the government. It is not exposed to the danger of being governed into the abyss, or of taking desperate measures to escape falling into the abyss. As a mere phase in a nation's political development, bureaucratic centralisation may be admissible; as a final form of government such as Richelieu contemplated (for he had no conception of a popularly governed State), it is nothing short of calamitous, as the troubles of the Fronde and the far more serious troubles of the Revolution were to demonstrate. It is the mark of the great statesman to foresee, to legislate for the future as well as the present. In this respect Richelieu is not a great statesman; he is only a great politician. He succeeded in maintaining his own supremacy under the ægis of the Crown, and doubtless in making France his debtor at the same time. He did not succeed in earning for himself the glory of the national benefactor for all time.

Even to the France of his own age, the government of Richelieu was not a success from the supreme point of view of the welfare of the people. The administration of Henry IV. and Sully was energetic and beneficent. The popular welfare is the supreme end. The absolute government of Louis XIII. and Richelieu was energetic; it cannot lay claim to the predicate of beneficence. With Richelieu the supreme end is the supremacy of the monarchy as embodied in his own viceroyalty. This, rather than the welfare of the subject, is his passion. Consequently France, under his auspices, is not the prosperous, contented France of Henry IV. and Sully. Henry left a sum of twenty millions in the treasury at the Bastille, and this sum represented the economies of a financial administration which succeeded nevertheless in reducing taxation. It was the surplus of the general prosperity of the country due to the beneficent financial policy of a great minister, abetted by a sympathetic king. Richelieu, on the contrary, put his hand deeply into the pocket of the taxpayer, under the plea of the necessity of State, without concerning himself much as to the effect of his exactions on the national prosperity. The people may suffer, the State may not, the State, not the people, being the main thing. "Money is nothing," said he, "provided we are enabled to do our business; . . . the better to defend the State, one must think less of one's purse, and since God only can create something out of nothing, it is necessary to increase the revenue of the treasury." Taxation was accordingly heavy, and the burden went on increasing to the end of his ministry. He might adduce the exigencies of his foreign policy, and the demands of the gigantic struggle against Spain and the emperor, as the supreme

consideration of patriotic statesmanship. But a Louis XII. had shown that it was possible to carry on a great war and yet maintain the national prosperity, and in Richelieu's internal administration we find but scant trace of the resource and sympathy which understood how to make war on the enemy, without making war on the people. If the people could not pay the taxes, and the fines imposed in case of failure, the government officials and their companies of soldiers seized the furniture, the cattle, the implements of the peasant, yea, even the doors, the windows, the roof of his house. The peasant in many places lost heart and abstained from cultivating his holding, for even if he succeeded in paying his own contribution, he was responsible for the whole assessment of the community, and must pay not only his own share, but the share of others till the whole sum was made up. Richelieu's intendants and subintendants were so many taskmasters of the wretched peasantry, and their exactions were the more inexorable inasmuch as they themselves were responsible for the sums for which a province or a district was assessed. Bloodshed was the frequent concomitant of this licensed pillage, the ruin of agriculture, which Sully had done so much to foster, the melancholy evidence of a vicious and tyrannic *régime*. Revolt was the inevitable result, revolt accompanied by agrarian outrage in Normandy, Guienne, Gascony, Limousin, Poitou, and revolt against an oppressive fiscal hierarchy was a sure sign that there was something wrong with the central government itself. When the government official is regarded as the enemy of the people, there is some ground for inferring that the government is the enemy of the people. The men of Avranches significantly inscribed on their placards the adage "Salvum fac gregem" instead of "Salvum fac regem." These revolts were suppressed by force of arms, but both revolt and suppression were not creditable to Richelieu's government. Arbitrary and oppressive taxation, varied by occasional vain attempts at retrenchment,[1] popular misery and rebellion, forced loans and other vicious financial expedients remind us that Richelieu's system of one man government might lead to despotism as well as ensure political order.

That the subject of reform, nevertheless, engrossed the mind of Richelieu in the earlier years of his ministry is evident from the numerous reforming edicts of this period. Witness the edict of June 1627 for the reform of the administration of justice.[2] Witness in

[1] See, for instance, the *édit sur les tailles*, January 1634, in Isambert, xvi. 389 *et seq.*

[2] Isambert, xvi. 204-214

particular the Code Michaud,[1] based partly on the demands of the States-General of 1614-15, and the assemblies of the Notables at Rouen and Paris in 1617 and 1626. It is less a code than a series of reforms, though, of course, like most other efforts at reform *en bloc* under the old *régime*, it fell far short in practice of its own ideals. It embraced a very wide range of subjects, such as the functions of the Parliaments, clerical jurisdiction, and ecclesiastical affairs, the administration of the hospitals, the privileges of the universities, the press, civil and criminal law, taxation, commerce, etc. If it cannot be regarded as the work of Richelieu, it undoubtedly bears the stamp of his genius. The Parliaments, for example, are allowed the right of remonstrance, but the right of the king to accept or ignore remonstrance against the royal edicts, and to act in accordance with his supreme will, is at the same time emphasised. The precise and imperative tone of such declarations are characteristically Richelieuian. Like the Parliaments, the clergy are told in very explicit terms that they must obey that will without question, and carry out the law independently of the pretensions of the Pope. Moreover, the reform of the Church shall be taken in hand without delay and without relapse. For debating ecclesiastics the cardinal-minister had as little liking as for Huguenot clerical politicians, and therefore the assembly of the clergy shall take place once only every five years, and the number of its members shall be limited to two deputies from each province. The official hierarchy throughout the provinces is likewise kept under strict discipline by a system of annual inspection carried out by masters of requests, who shall make a thorough inquisition into the state of local government in all its branches, and report to the chancellor all abuses and delinquencies. Some of the examples of this inquisitive *régime* are very curious. The cardinal's central government even descends to take note of the wearing apparel and the table of the well-to-do classes, and luxury and an over-rich diet are punished by the confiscation of such objectionable articles. From this sample of the 461 articles of the code it will be apparent that if even a modest portion of them had been carried into practice, the government of Richelieu would have earned for itself a high tribute for effective statesmanship.

The cardinal was as resolute a champion of ecclesiastical as of aristocratic subordination. The king, he insisted, not the Pope, was the head of the Gallican Church. Not only is his holiness denied all temporal authority over the French crown, he must submit to be told that the ecclesiastical is subordinate to the royal authority.

[1] Isambert, xvi. 223-344.

The papal edicts must be sanctioned by the royal council and verified by the Parliament before they can be executed by the bishops. The cardinal-minister upholding and enforcing the supremacy of the State is certainly a very different person from the Bishop of Luçon, orator of the clergy in the States-General of 1614-15. In the interest of that supremacy he was a staunch upholder of the national aspirations of the Gallican Church, as championed by Pierre Dupuy, author of the "Libertés de l'Église Gallicane," who, while advocating independence of Rome, emphasised the dependence of Church on State. In the interest of that authority he as staunchly upheld the right of appeal from the ecclesiastical courts to the Parliament (*appel comme d'abus*), and otherwise invaded the privileges of the clergy. The most important of these privileges was immunity from taxation. The clergy voted, occasionally, a sum of money to the royal treasury under the title of a "Don gratuit," or free gift. Richelieu maintained the right of the State to subject the Church to the payment of a regular tax, in the form of a perpetual guarantee of a certain annual sum instead of an intermittent gift; and though he failed to establish this principle, he succeeded in extorting a sum of five and a half million livres on the pretext of arrears due since 1520. His imperious will was felt, too, in the work of reform, especially of the orders of Cluny, Citeaux, and the Præmonstratensians, of which he was general, and though he knew neither religious bigotry nor religious enthusiasm, he befriended the reforming activity of men like St Vincent de Paul and François de Sales. While hostile to the Ultramontanism of the Jesuits, as represented by Sanctarellus, whose book was condemned by the Sorbonne and consigned to the flames by the Parliament,[1] he encouraged their educational work and intervened to check the persecution of the order on its undertaking not to teach doctrines subversive of public order. Independence of character or principle, even when springing from conscientious scruples, was as obnoxious and as harshly punished in priest as in magnate, and his tyrannic treatment of the Abbé St Cyran,[2] the spiritual-minded man who valued his independence higher than a bishopric, and resisted Richelieu's ecclesiastical supremacy as strenuously as he contested that of the Pope, is a bad instance of the vindictiveness that he allowed at times to get the better of his tolerant disposition.

There was one body which Richelieu could not entirely ignore

[1] Mémoires de Richelieu, iii. 22-27.

[2] See tom. ii. of the Mémoires de Mathieu de Molé, edited by Champollion-Figeac for the Société de l'Histoire de France.

in the work of legislation. The Parliament of Paris held tenaciously to its right to refuse, on occasion, its sanction to the royal edicts by declining to register them. The resourceful cardinal found expedients to browbeat its opposition, and did not scruple to make ample use of them. *Lettres de jussion* conveyed to the court, in case of dispute or objection, the royal command to register, and if these letters were met by renewed remonstrance, a royal interdict forbade further parley. In the last resort a *lit de justice*, at which the king appeared in person, or by representative, to enjoin obedience, silenced all opposition. During these audiences the harsh tone often assumed by Louis betrayed the animus of the minister, who took care to prime him for the occasion. Richelieu regarded the Parliament not merely as a thorn in the royal flesh, he ascribed to it, and partly with reason, an inclination to intrigue, contention, and factiousness, and he saw in the political functions which it claimed, only the danger to the unlimited power of the Crown, not the service which its opposition to illegal tactics or oppressive measures might render to both king and people. The Parliament shall, therefore, be relegated to its judicial functions, and its tendency to interfere in legislation be rigorously checked, is threatened with persecution if it presumes to deliberate without the royal permission on affairs of State, is commanded to register edicts referring to government without demur, may remonstrate against those dealing with matters of finance, which the king may, or may not, take into consideration, but shall not presume to modify them, or protest against them in language prejudicial to the royal authority.[1] "Nothing," he told it, "better conduces to the maintenance of States than the power of the sovereign duly recognised by the subject. Monarchy is the soul which animates the State, and lends it strength and perfection. The absolute authority of the Crown brings glory to the nation; its feebleness results in national decline. The sovereign may not endure to share his authority with the subject."[2] "No body can have any authority," said Louis, re-echoing the cardinal, "in any circumstances whatsoever, except as derived from me."[3] "Je veux être obei" ("I wish to be obeyed"), is a sufficient reason for submission. "Kings are the living images of God. . . . The royal majesty is second only to the divine." No wonder, then, that this august personage "may increase the taxes as much as it pleases his sovereign authority." "Royalty," according to Le Bret, "is a supreme power conferred on an individual, which gives him the right to command absolutely. It should be taken as a maxim that even if the sovereign

[1] See Isambert, xvi. 529-535. [2] *Ibid.* [3] Lettres, ii. 719.

abuses his power, it is not permissible on this account to resist him."[1] "Firmness, not negotiation, is the only way to deal with the Parliament," was the characteristic remedy prescribed for an opposition which, though prone at times to legal quibbling, was all the organised body of public opinion that was left of the old constitutional forms under Richelieu's *régime*. Firmness meant, in the last resort, imprisonment or exile,[2] and this despotic firmness succeeded perfectly in gagging political opinion for the time being. It was not till the days of Richelieu's successor that the Parliament found an opportunity of trying a fall with this system of gag, and then the reaction came with all the intensity of a miniature revolution. When monarchy becomes a religion, scepticism, as has been well said, becomes a revolution.[3]

Though Richelieu gagged the Parliament, he was by no means disregardful of public opinion, or oblivious of the effect of his measures on the national mind. He was anxious to carry the nation with him, and strove to place his actions before it in the best light. The tone of his memoirs affords ample evidence of the fact. Whether the motives adduced in the sight of the people were always the real motives, the explanations always truthful, is another question. It would be very risky to draw exclusively on this source for the inner history of his government.[4] A minister or a monarch who must always appear to be right, must find it difficult always to tell the truth. While reckoning with, and even cultivating public opinion, he none the less exercised a severe censorship of the press. The monarch, or rather the cardinal, might expatiate on his good intentions towards the people, the people might not venture to criticise the monarch, in other words, the cardinal. Official journalism was permitted, independent criticism was severely repressed. To criticise the government is *lèse majesté*, and *lèse majesté* extends to thoughts as well as words. Richelieu was incapable of realising the fact that government without criticism tends to become government without improvement. Moreover, undue restriction of the press provokes the furtive attack in the form of illicit writing, which is more eagerly read than open and fair criticism would be. In the reign of Henry IV. the freedom of the press had been comparatively large, as the controversial writings of the period prove. Richelieu, on the other hand, disliked criticism and loved silence, imposed it,

[1] See Avenel, Richelieu et la Monarchie Absolue, i. 173, 174.

[2] See, for instance, Mémoires, x. 539.

[3] Avenel, Richelieu, i. 184.

[4] Michelet carries scepticism too far: "If we would not know Richelieu, we should read his memoirs" (Histoire de France, xi. 363).

too, on all but himself and his panegyrists. The periodic press, which, nevertheless, started into prominence under his *régime*—the *Mercure Français* and the *Gazette*—were exclusively his organs, controlled from his cabinet, and consequently uncritical in their treatment of events, but with a decided tendency to see in the cardinal the general providence of Europe as well as France. The censorship of books, which had hitherto been exercised by the Parliament and the Sorbonne, was transferred to the keeper of the seals,[1] and the punishment of publishing any work without the express sanction of this functionary was confiscation of life and goods. The natural consequence was that independence and originality in the criticism of public affairs took refuge in the printing presses of Holland, Germany, and England. It is a bad omen for a country, however apparently successful its government for the time being, when public spirit is artificially stifled by such a decree as that of the Council of State, of date 2nd November 1627,[2] which forbade all discussion concerning the sovereign authority, not only of his majesty Louis XIII., but of other sovereigns and kings, without royal permission, and under pain of punishment for sedition. The decree had its victims, and not only the Bastille, but the gibbet claimed its share of them.[3]

While hostile to the critical publicist, Richelieu was the patron of the man of letters. Literature was not yet an honourable profession, if it could be called a profession at all. In an age when the most magnificent grandees could not read fluently or write correctly their own language, it is not surprising that literary work was regarded as demeaning, or at least as requiring an apology on the part of the aristocratic memoir writer or poetaster. To his credit Richelieu rose above this ridiculous prejudice, and if he could not claim distinction as an author, apart from the historic value of his memoirs, he showed an interest in literature as an art, and was the generous patron of men of letters. If he suppressed political, he encouraged literary criticism by the foundation of the Academy[4] in 1635. He did not surmount the prejudice of his time to the extent of becoming a member of this chartered literary fraternity, but to patronise it said a good deal for his appreciation of the high vocation of letters, and literature of course went into ecstasies over absolute government (witness the panegyrics of a Voiture and a Balsac). In

[1] Isambert, xvi. 164 (January 1626). [2] See Avenel, Richelieu, i. 158-165.

[3] See, for instance, Mémoires de Richelieu, iii. 307, 308.

[4] The letters patent are dated January 1635. They were not registered by the Parliament till July 1637 (Isambert, xvi. 418-420).

this subservient tone we may discern the keynote of the reign of Louis XIV., of which the age of Richelieu was both the political and the intellectual forerunner.

It is in his foreign policy that Richelieu appears most masterly. He was not original; he merely took up that of Henry IV., but he displayed consummate ability and resource, both in diplomatic manipulation and in military organisation. In his more sanguine moments he dreamed of carrying his plans far beyond the immediate objective of Henry IV. The crown of Charlemagne flitted across his imagination, and a great French empire, such as had tempted Charles VIII. and Francis I. to disaster, should own allegiance to the imperial sceptre of Louis XIII. He would have absorbed territory to which he had no right from the point of view of international law, would have played the part of conqueror, as well as of defender of the liberties of Europe against Spain. Practically, however, his programme contemplated no more than the hegemony of France in Europe, with such an extension of territory as would enable it to maintain this coveted position. This policy he explained in a memoir to the king in one pregnant sentence, "In foreign policy you ought to set before you, as a perpetual design, the arrest of the progress of Spain, and as the aim of this nation is to augment its domination and extend its boundaries, France must have a care to fortify herself, open doors of ingress into neighbouring States, and be in a position to guarantee them from the oppression of Spain, when occasion shall offer."[1] Consequently she must maintain a powerful navy, fortify Metz, and obtain possession of Strasburg—the door of Germany,—extend her frontier towards Switzerland, secure Salûce—the door of Italy,—Navarre—the door of Spain. The first steps in the realisation of this policy were the marriage of Louis' sister, Henrietta, to Charles of England, in preference to a Spanish matrimonial alliance; the successful intervention in the disputed Mantuan succession on behalf of the Duke of Nevers, the French candidate; and the ousting of the Spaniards from the Valteline, the link between Austria and Milan. While thus opposing and checking the Austro-Spanish influence in the north of Italy, his masterly diplomacy succeeded in maintaining the guise of neutrality in the great struggle in Germany, which began in 1618, and was only to end in 1648, until he could throw the strength of France into the scale on the side of German Protestantism. Richelieu was as free from religious prejudice in his foreign as in his internal policy. Though a prince of the Church, he was above all a patriot and a politician. Like Henry

[1] Lettres, iii. 172-213.

IV., he recognised that the cause of the German Protestants was the cause of France, and Père Joseph and others of his trusty agents intrigued and bribed,[1] without the slightest scruple, to array the Northern Powers, Holland, the German Protestant princes in one solid phalanx of opposition to the champions of Catholicism. Mansfield and Christian of Denmark being worsted in the struggle with Wallenstein and Tilly, a more formidable champion was conjured by French gold[2] from the recesses of the north. The feudal constitution of the German empire, which was threatened by the imperial policy of centralisation in the service of dynastic and religious interests, was saved by the cardinal-minister, who dealt such terrible blows at the strength of feudalism in France. Gustavus rolled back the tide of imperial success by the victories of Breitenfeld and Lützen, and when the defeat of Nördlingen threatened to undo the work of the dead Swedish hero, Richelieu was ready in 1635[3] to throw himself into the breach with fairly well-equipped armies, and devote all the energy of the last seven years of his ministry, unhampered by political disorder within, to the task of political expansion without. He did not live to witness the triumph of this policy, which aggrandised France at the expense, not only of Habsburg-Spanish domination, but of the integrity of the German Empire. A few weeks after one of these hardly won victories which contributed to this consummation—the victory of Leipsig (November 1642)—he succumbed to the infirmities which only an iron will had enabled him to surmount for many years. It fell to the lot of Mazarin to reap, six years later, for France, in a substantial acquisition of territory and prestige, the harvest which his great predecessor had sown. Without the work of Richelieu the work of Mazarin would have been impossible. His powers as an organiser were as high as his abilities as a diplomatist. He gave France an army and a navy, and thus laid the foundations of its future predominance. His first love—the profession of the soldier—stuck to him in spite of his cardinal's hat, though his plans of campaign[4] did not prove that

[1] Richelieu did not spare the royal purse in buying allies: "La première chose à laquelle le roi devoit tendre etoit de tâcher a faire par argent, quoiqu'il en pût coûter, continuer la guerre en Allemagne et en Hollande, sans que le roi fût obligé de se mettre ouvertement de la partie" (Mémoires, vii. 271).

[2] He guaranteed to Gustavus for five years an annual subsidy of 400,000 crowns (Isambert, xvi. 362).

[3] See Mémoires, viii. 298-300.

[4] His correspondence contain constant evidence of his personal interest in, and supervision of military and naval matters; see, for instance, ii. 395-397, 411, 412; iii. 580, etc.

France lost in the cardinal a great captain. But the labour which he gave to the organisation of the army, bore remarkable fruits in the influence of French militarism on European history throughout the seventeenth century. Le Tellier and Louvois only carried further the reforms which he introduced. The part which he played in the creation of the French navy[1] was still more active, for he combined with his numerous other functions that of Grand Master of Navigation, and if his foreign policy exercised a baneful influence on agriculture by reason of excessive taxation, his interest in naval expansion led him to encourage the merchant marine, and developed trade and colonisation.[2] The price which he paid for the grandeur of the State was, however, a heavy one, and the legacy of a large debt and widespread discontent, which he left to his successor, must be placed in the opposite scale against the territorial acquisitions, and the national preponderance for which his diplomatic and his organising ability paved the way.

SOURCES OF THIS CHAPTER.—Isambert, Recueil, xvi.; Lettres, Instructions Diplomatiques, et Papiers d'État de Cardinal de Richelieu, edited for the Documents Inédits by M. Avenel; Mémoires de Cardinal de Richelieu in Petitot (second series); Zeller, La Minorité de Louis XIII.; Bazin, Histoire de France sous Louis XIII.; Hanotaux, L'Histoire du Cardinal de Richelieu (in course of publication); Avenel, Richelieu et la Monarchie Absolue; Thierry, Essai; Aumale, Histoire des Princes de Condé; Bassompierre, Mémoires; Succinte Narration de Toutes les Grandes Actions du Roi, in Testament Politique de Richelieu (Foncemagne, and edition of Amsterdam); Michelet, Histoire de France, xi.; Mémoires de Madame Mornay; St Aulaire, Histoire de la Fronde; Mémoires de Mathieu de Molé, edited for the Société de l'Histoire de France by Champollion-Figeac; Correspondance de Henri de Sourdis, edited for the Documents Inédits by Eugène Sue.

[1] See Introduction to the Correspondance de Henri de Sourdis, edited for the Documents Inédits by Eugène Sue.

[2] His interest in colonial expansion is evidenced by the edict founding the company to colonise New France, which exempted the products of Canada arriving in French ports from all import duties for fifteen years. See Isambert, xvi. 215-223; cf. 415-417 and 540-548.

## CHAPTER XI.

### ANNE OF AUSTRIA AND MAZARIN—THE PARLIAMENTARY REVOLT AGAINST ABSOLUTE MONARCHY (1643-1661).

THE career of Mazarin affords a still more remarkable example than that of Richelieu of the rise of political genius from obscurity to power and fame. Though Richelieu climbed by his ability and address from the government of a poor diocese to an almost despotic sway over a great State, he was at least of aristocratic birth and had powerful family connections. Mazarin, whose ability and address likewise raised him to a position of commanding eminence, second only to that of Richelieu, was not only of humble birth, but a foreigner, an Italian. Born at Pescina in the Abruzzi, on the 14th July 1602, and educated at a Jesuit college at Rome, he emerged from the disorders of a life of dissipation in the papal capital to become successively chamberlain to Jerome Colonna—son of the Constable of Naples, with whom he studied at the Spanish university of Alcala — doctor of civil and canon law, captain in a papal infantry regiment, and attaché of an embassy sent by Urban VIII. to intervene in the dispute over the succession to the Duchy of Mantua. The subtlety of the versatile diplomatist contributed to the cessation of hostilities between the French and Spanish armies. The glory of the achievement was enhanced by the sensational circumstances in which Mazarin announced the conclusion of peace. The hostile armies were on the point of engaging in battle before the walls of Casale, on the 26th October 1630, when the intrepid attaché was seen rushing between the front ranks of the would-be belligerents with the cry, "Peace, peace." This important service augmented his diplomatic reputation, and earned him the patronage of Richelieu, to whom he had been introduced, in 1628, by the nuncio Bagni.[1] Though somewhat dubious as to his character, the great cardinal recognised a born

[1] Lettres de Richelieu, iii. 847-849. Cf. Memoires de Richelieu, vi. 338, 339.

diplomatist in the indefatigable, supple Italian. He had the opportunity of further gauging his powers during a couple of visits which he paid to Paris in his capacity as papal representative. From 1634 to 1636, he filled the high office of papal nuncio to France, and was already aspiring to the cardinalate. Richelieu became his patron in the effort to obtain the red hat, which at length came to him in December 1641. Two years previously he had decided to enter the service of Louis XIII., and was employed on various important missions. Before his death Richelieu expressed his sense of his services and his pre-eminent ability, by recommending him to Louis as his own successor.

The artificial character of Richelieu's system of absolute government, which it fell to Mazarin to maintain against both the "Importans" and the Frondists, appeared in the facility with which the Parliament modified the will of Louis. Four days after the king's death, on the 14th May 1643, the Parliament ignored the edict appointing a Council of Regency to share the government with the queen, during the minority of Louis XIV., then a child of five years, which it had registered four weeks before, and declared Anne of Austria regent with full powers.[1] The revolt of the Parliament was very gratifying to those who saw in it the forerunner of the reaction that was to relax the autocratic compression of the late *régime*. The next stroke would be the dismissal of Mazarin. The crowd of would-be ministers and courtiers who, under the leadership of the Duke of Beaufort and the Bishop of Beauvais, relied on the resentment or the fickleness of the regent to undo the system of Richelieu and his accomplices, already rubbed their hands in prospect of their participation in the good work. What was their bewilderment on gathering at the Louvre, on the evening of the 18th May, to hear that Mazarin had not packed his belongings and decamped to Italy! The Italian adventurer, who had been careful to ingratiate himself into the goodwill of Anne of Austria, was a much stronger man than the Italian adventurer who had asserted his ascendency over Maria de Medici. Mazarin, as gallant and avaricious as Concini, possessed the political genius which was lacking in his countryman, and in honouring him with a confidence which by-and-by developed into the warmest attachment, the regent ensured the permanence both of Richelieu's internal system and of his foreign policy. Assured of her co-operation and of the support of the Duke of Orleans and the Prince of Condé, whose friendship he bribed, Mazarin won an unexpected triumph over the forces of reaction. The intrigues of the "Importans," as the aristocratic

[1] Isambert, xvii. 2, 15: cf. Mémoires de Mathieu de Molé, iii. 59-65.

reactionaries were called, were discomfited by the arrest and imprisonment of the Duke of Beaufort, and the banishment of the Duchess of Chevreuse and the Duke of Vendome.[1] The change from the simple and melancholy court of Louis XIII., to the extravagance and gaiety of that of the regent, was the only gratification allowed to the hopes of an intriguing noblesse, while the loyalty of the Huguenots, who showed a restive disposition, was secured by an assurance of toleration.[2]

As in the case of the letters of Richelieu, it is from the correspondence[3] of Mazarin that we derive the most realistic impression of the man and his work. Richelieu had prepared the ground, but it was reserved to Mazarin to win the battle, in the field of foreign policy. That he succeeded in carrying on the struggle and gathering its fruits is the best evidence that the mantle of the great cardinal had fallen on his successor. The hand of Richelieu, we may almost say, continued to weave the threads of the destiny of Europe from his grave with the same mastery and versatility. "Although the death of M. the Cardinal is an irreparable loss to the State," he writes to M. St Romain on the 8th January 1643, "it will cause no alteration or respite in the conduct of affairs. The king (*i.e.*, Mazarin) is in truth resolved to push them with even more vigour and firmness than he has hitherto done."[4] His position, he complains, allows him no repose, and the necessity of maintaining himself against his enemies adds its cares to the burden of ruling the State.[5] He applied his sagacity, with extraordinary insight, to the difficult political problems presented by the European situation. In Italy he made his diplomatic address felt in the conservation of the alliance of Savoy, and in the successful intervention in the quarrels of petty Italian potentates with a view to obtain their neutrality, if their union in a great Italian league against Spain should prove unattainable.[6] This league was to be the preliminary of the conquest of Naples and the substitution of

[1] See Mémoires de La Rochefoucauld (Petitot), i. 374-389.

[2] One of his first acts was to assure the Huguenots of the protection of the regent. See declaration of 18th June 1643, renewing that of 1610: "Que nosdits subjets faisans profession de la religion pretendue reformée jouissent et ayent l'exercise libre et entier de ladite religion conformément aux édits" (Isambert, xvii. 33).

[3] Lettres du Cardinal Mazarin pendant son Ministère, edited for the Documents Inédits by A. Chéruel. M. Chéruel's Histoire de France pendant la Minorité de Louis XIV. is the best history of Mazarin's administration.

[4] Lettres, i. 42. [5] *Ibid.*, i. 321, 322.

[6] *Ibid.*, i. 67, 68, 78, 79, 81, 82, 107, etc.

French for Spanish preponderance in Italy. Though, like all his predecessors, he failed in this far-reaching policy, he succeeded in checkmating Spain by augmenting the political influence of France in the Italian Peninsula. At the Hague his master hand is seen in the discomfiture of the Spanish intrigues to prevent the renewal of the alliance with Holland in the beginning of 1644,[1] and in the effort to counteract the attempt to form a counter-league between Denmark, Poland, and Muscovy. At the courts of Portugal and Sweden, too, he was busy through his agents strengthening the armies of France.[2] Even the trend of events in England, engrossed though it was by the great civil war, was the object of his active solicitude, which was excited by the fear lest the Parliament of Paris should be infected by the revolutionary spirit of the Long Parliament. Ambassador followed ambassador to attempt to bring about an accommodation between Charles I. and his opponents in the interest of the monarchic authority in France as well as in England.[3] He displayed the same masterly insight in dealing with the military as with the political situation. Witness his bold project of the siege of Thionville in 1643 in opposition to the majority of the council.[4] The quondam captain of a papal infantry regiment had evidently not forgotten the art of war, as is further evident from the acute and serviceable counsels which he gave to the Duke of Enghien, one of the greatest captains of the age.[5] His correspondence with Turenne reveals the same remarkable activity and insight,[6] and though he did not commit the folly of trying to direct operations from his cabinet, the generals owed more to his sagacious suggestions than the writers of memoirs and histories, who had not seen his letters, have observed.

Mazarin, it should not be forgotten, was assisted by many able diplomatists, and to their assistance the triumph of his policy owed much, though he deserves the credit of being himself the chief agent of his schemes. Lyonne was both an apt pupil and an able coadjutor in the work of negotiation. D'Avaux and Servien were equally apt and equally able, and the names of Le Thuillerie, Fontenay-Mareuil, D'Estrades, Plessis-Besançon, Chanut, Bellièvre, D'Avaugour, the Italians Bichi, Grimaldi, Bentivoglio, are noticeable names in the group of which Mazarin was the master spirit. Michel le Tellier belongs to the group in his capacity of war minister, and Colbert may already be remarked in the background. Mazarin not only knew to discover ability, but to use and reward it. He has been accused of prolonging both the war and the peace negotiations

[1] Lettres, i. 278-280, etc. [2] *Ibid.*, i. 333, 600, etc. [3] *Ibid.*, i. 343-345, etc.
[4] *Ibid.*, i. 311, 312. [5] *Ibid.*, ii. 311-313. [6] *Ibid.*, ii. 424, etc.

in order to establish his own power and keep dangerous popular magnates like Condé in occupation. He has himself rebutted these accusations, often repeated since, and happily for his memory, they may be relegated to the category of malicious calumnies of which the Fronde produced a plentiful crop.[1]

The transaction on which Mazarin's reputation as a statesman mainly rests is the Treaty of Westphalia, for which the generalship of Turenne and Condé's great son, the Duke of Enghien, paved the way. The victories of Rocroi and Nördlingen, the accumulation of successes that rewarded the valour of the French armies in Germany, Belgium, Spain, Italy, during the last years of the gigantic struggle, strengthened the hands of the diplomatists, who, at the same time, laboured at negotiation at Münster and Osnabrück. In the final arrangement Mazarin, who contemplated a large acquisition of territory not merely on the Rhine, but in Belgium and the north of Spain, limited his demands to the concession of Breisach and the Austrian possessions in Alsace, including the Sundgau, the Alsatian Landgraviate, and the ten imperial cities, with the right to garrison Philipsburg. While he thus wrested the command of the Upper Rhine from the emperor as compensation for the enormous sacrifices which the struggle had cost France, he forced his imperial antagonist to guarantee the Protestantism of Germany and the independence of all European States, small as well as large. The policy of Henry IV. had triumphed, and though in the hands of Richelieu and Mazarin it had been a selfish, if a patriotic policy, and had partially disintegrated the empire as well as laid the foundation of a French preponderance, which was ultimately in its turn to become a menace to the liberties of Europe, it was so far a triumph for national liberties as well as for French aggrandisement. It cannot but earn the preference of the historian who remembers what the power of a Philip II. meant for Spain, the Netherlands, Italy, and what the policy of the imperialists meant for Germany. That policy would have resulted not merely in encroachment on the autonomy of other nations; it would have repressed the aspirations, political as well as religious, begotten by the Reformation. It would have meant the domination of the Inquisition and the Jesuits, and revived the brutal policy of the counter-Reformation, as exemplified in Spain, the Netherlands, the hereditary dominions of Austria, in France itself. Freedom of conscience and political liberty were on the side of Henry, Richelieu, and Mazarin, as against King Philip and

[1] See the long letter to the Comte de Brienne in which Mazarin justifies his political actions, Lettres, iv. 90-107.

Emperor Ferdinand, though freedom of conscience and political liberty might have wished for more liberal champions, and might not feel permanently safe in the hands of absolute monarchs even of the type of a Henry IV. But as far as absolute monarchy could consistently champion that cause, and as far as political expediency could allow them a free hand, Henry and his coadjutors were on the right side—the side of human progress. They championed the independence of Holland and Portugal, even if they did so mainly because it was in the interest of France to check Spain in the Netherlands and the Iberian Peninsula. They gave what measure of liberty of conscience to Protestants it was in their power to give, and but for their action Europe would have become the victim of this reaction of bigotry, allied with absolutism of the type of Philip II., from which they saved it for the time being. Unfortunately for France and for Europe, Louis XIV. was not content to abide by this policy. Even Mazarin had outstepped the limits of Henry's programme of annexing all French-speaking territories, and by his absorption of a large slice of German territory, in order to extend the eastern boundary of France to the Rhine, entered on the path of conquest and unjust aggression on which an egoistic ambition was to lead Louis XIV. far beyond the bounds of safe and righteous statesmanship. In playing the aggressor without and the despot within, Louis became, in some respects, a second Philip II. It was a fatal moment for France when he refused to tolerate the Huguenots and to moderate his foreign policy in accordance with the views of his grandfather. For the present, however, Mazarin's hands were too full of internal cares to think of carrying his aggressive policy further. Before the conclusion of the Peace of Westphalia he was face to face with an internal crisis, brought on by oppression and financial disorder, which threatened to destroy the system of Richelieu by a revolution. On this occasion the leader of revolt was the Parliament of Paris. "It is necessary," he wrote to Servien on the 14th August 1648, "to conclude peace at the earliest possible moment. It is not the foreign enemy that causes me anxiety. He is exhausted apparently beyond hope of recovery. It is the French themselves who excite my apprehensions."[1]

The finances, already seriously disordered under Richelieu, went from bad to worse under Mazarin. At the commencement of the regency the revenues of 1644-46 were already anticipated. The sums necessary to carry on the war and the government were advanced by speculators at the ruinous interest of, in some cases, as much as

[1] Lettres, iii. 175.

one-third of the capital. Mazarin had not only to pay for an expensive war, he had to find money to maintain the extravagance of the queen, to satisfy the greed of courtiers, and to bribe his own creatures. He found an apt instrument of extortion in his countryman, Jean Particelli, Sieur d'Emery, who had been condemned at Lyons twenty years before as a fraudulent bankrupt, and whom he successively created Controller-General and Superintendent of Finances. In the opinion of Cardinal Retz, Emery was "the most corrupt spirit of his century." "He only sought names in order to discover edicts. I cannot better express the character of this person than by quoting his own words. I heard him say in full council that good faith is only for the merchants, and that the masters of requests who would have the king observe it in affairs of State ought to be hanged."[1] With Emery were associated in the work of extortion other Italians of equally shady reputation. Under the *régime* of Anne of Austria the nation was as much the prey of greedy and unscrupulous foreigners as under that of Maria de Medici. A large part of the money thus wrung from the people contributed merely to enrich its parasites. Emery tried with casuistic effrontery to convince it of the utility of his schemes. He raised a loan of twelve millions of livres at twenty-five per cent. This ruinous interest was, he argued, advantageous to the nation, "for the higher the interest on such loans the greater the profit of the people, which enriches itself at the prince's expense." He forgot that it was the nation that paid this exorbitant interest, and that the profit went into the pockets of the speculators, foreign as well as French, who were the principal State creditors. The people presently showed, in the forcible form of revolt, that it could reason more logically than the controller-general. To judge by the tone of his letters at this period, Mazarin cannot be charged with the crime of deliberate complicity with the financial maladministration, though he ought certainly to have filled the place of Sully with a person of higher character and more solid ability than his supple and unscrupulous countryman. Nor must it be forgotten that he inherited the legacy of a tremendous European struggle, to which France was irrevocably committed,—inherited, too, the financial disorder inherent in the system of his predecessor, and that he could not, if he would, make benevolent financial experiments while the war lasted. That he desired to do so is certain, and the wish must count for a good deal in the circumstances. In 1643-44 the peasantry of Rouergue, Poitou, Saintonge, etc., gave expression to its detestation of the oppressive *tailles* in revolt, outrage, and pillage.

[1] Mémoires du Cardinal de Retz, Petitot, XLIV.-XLVI. i. 190.

The revolt was suppressed, as revolt must be in times of national stress, with a firm, but not relentless hand. "Maintain the authority of the king without losing the goodwill of the people," he wrote to the Duke of Épernon, "and procure him the voluntary obedience of those towards whom it would pain him to use force in order to secure it. Only pressing necessity demands the payment of taxes, and every means shall be taken to contribute to the relief of the poor. The greatest desire of his majesty is to enable the people to pay easily what is exacted of them. The intendants shall receive the most urgent and precise commands to spare the people and shield them from the violence of the soldiery, which you are sternly to repress, and the malversation of individuals."[1] Benevolent intentions were a poor sedative for popular discontent as long as they were not practically seconded by an enlightened financial administration, and Mazarin had too many personal enemies to nurse this discontent to count on the forbearance of the nation in deference to the exigencies of the war. From the outset of his government he was beset by the reactionary spirit inseparable from the repressive system of his predecessor. This spirit was undoubtedly, on the part of the Parliament in particular, which was influenced to some extent by the politically reactionary and morally elevated tone of the Jansenist movement,[2] the expression of a legitimate aspiration after liberty and legality, though it afforded at the same time a handle for intriguing and factious malcontents. Mazarin saw in this ferment only the danger to order within and the cause of France abroad, for he had as little sympathy as Richelieu with the aspirations after constitutional liberty. Moreover, the example of England, in its struggle with a despotism akin to that of Richelieu, disquieted him. It tended to quicken the spirit of insubordination, which was not slow to perceive the relaxation of the rein in the regent's hands. "If your majesty does not take measures to prevent it, the Parliament and the magnates will assume too much authority. . . . Parliaments, princes, governors are striving to undo, under specious pretexts, what has been accomplished, during the late reign, to assert the royal authority and render it absolute. They work to restore the state of things which prevailed when France, governed in appearance by a king, was in reality a republic." To this end they raised the cry of an intended persecution of the Protestants, in spite of the fact that two Protestants—Turenne and Gassion—were at the head of two French armies,[3] and the explicit determination of the minister to

[1] Lettres, i. 474, 475.

[2] See Gaillardin, Histoire du Règne de Louis XIV., i. 311.

[3] Lettres, ii. 343.

maintain the Edict of Nantes. "The queen," wrote Mazarin to the Duke de la Force, "will protect without distinction all her subjects who will render the obedience due by them."[1] They had a far more legitimate pretext in the oppressive taxation, which not only drove the peasantry to revolt under the auspices of malcontent nobles, but raised the opposition of the cities as well. There were riots at Valence, Montpellier, and other towns in the south, while Paris was thrown into tumultuous excitement by a tax on houses built in the faubourgs (*Édit du Toisé*),[2] in contravention of an antiquated edict of Henry II. The Parliament remonstrated, the people demonstrated, and the government momentarily receded. As, however, the income-tax (*taxe des Aisés*), which Emery substituted, encountered the determined opposition of the financiers, whose ruinous and ill-gotten gains would bear the major part of the burden, the controller-general again had recourse, among other devices, to that of the *toisé*. The poor inhabitants of the faubourgs once more besieged the Parliament with their outcries. The President of the Grand Chamber, Mathieu Molé (the First President, as he was also called), refused to intervene, but the Courts of Inquests and Requests demanded that the various chambers or courts of the whole Parliament should be convened to consider the question of the rampant financial abuses, and the misgovernment of the State. The demand was aimed against both Mazarin and Emery. Molé refused to grant it, and on their persisting, Mazarin caused the Presidents Barillon and Gayant and the Councillors Lecomte and Queslin to be apprehended and exiled. Thereupon the agitation spread to the whole Parliament, which demanded their recall through the first president. Mazarin was not made of the same stern stuff as Richelieu, and complied so far as to deliver up Gayant and the two councillors. The liberation of Barillon he would on no account concede. The Parliament repeated its remonstrances. "The public order," said Molé, in the presence of the regent, "cannot suffer that an official of the king, *or any other individual*, be imprisoned except by way of public procedure, which instructs the judges as to the truth of actions, and is meant to secure the punishment of crimes, and provide guarantees against calumny." The chancellor adduced knowledge of the intrigues of Barillon as a sufficient reason for his imprisonment and of the action of the regent. "How then," burst out the queen, "we have seen the greatest personages of the kingdom imprisoned and exiled, and nobody has made a noise about it, and now, because I have caused a couple of councillors to be apprehended, my Parlia-

[1] Lettres, i. 404, 405. [2] Isambert, xvii. 38.

ment must presume to put me on my trial for it."[1] The Parliament was not to be cowed, however, and for three months did nothing but reclaim the incarcerated president and deliberate on ordinances to safeguard the liberty of the subject, till the death of Barillon put an end for the time being to its recriminations.[1]

Emery next resorted, among other expedients, to the creation and sale of offices. To stifle remonstrances, the boy king appeared at a *lit de justice*,[2] on the 17th September 1645, to demand the registration of the fiscal edicts, eighteen in number. The Parliament submitted to be lectured into compliance by his little majesty, who innocently expressed his determination "to suffer no diminution of the royal authority." By means of these *lits de justice* and *lettres de cachet*, or arbitrary warrants of imprisonment, Mazarin and Emery managed to warp criticism for a short time. But the discontent was too widespread to be extinguished by lectures from a ten-year-old boy to greyheaded and patriotic men, while bands of soldiers perambulated the provinces to support the collectors of the taxes, and to madden the people by their oppression and cruelties. The peasant saw his implements and his cattle carried off to be sold for the benefit of the State, *alias* a gang of brigands, and himself and his family exposed to starvation and ruin, or to die of ill-usage in a debtors' prison. Notwithstanding these extortions, the government lived on anticipations, and in 1647 the revenue of the three following years was consumed in advance. In November 1646, Emery took refuge in a tax on all provisions entering Paris (*Édit du Tarif*).[3] This tax, which affected all classes, was fairly equitable, and the wealthier would naturally contribute the larger share of it. The Parliament, however, would have none of it, but Emery got it registered by the Court of Aids, and obtained a considerable sum from this source. In the beginning of 1648 he abandoned both the income and provision taxes, and proposed the creation of new offices, particularly of twelve new masters of requests, at so much a head. On the 15th January 1648, the king held a second "bed of justice," and compelled the Parliament to register a second series of edicts. The Chancellor Seguier expatiated on the necessity of supplies for the prosecution of a glorious war, whose many laurels were a recompense to the nation for its sacrifices. The first president adopted a compromising tone befitting an occasion when surrender was the only alternative, but he hinted, in congratulating the regent on the convalescence of the king from his recent illness, that there is a power superior even to absolute kings, and that the

[1] Isambert, xvii. 43-45. [2] *Ibid.*, xvii. 54. [3] *Ibid.*, xvii. 60.

sovereign in France can only count on a voluntary obedience God, said he, in referring to the illness of Louis, has shown to all that it is He who strikes the cedars and crumbles them into dust, who permits that the sovereigns of the earth, who assume that all must give way to them, are brought to the brink of the grave. If the subjects, continued he, resist not the prince, this obedience is a more certain mark of their voluntary submission than of the absolute power of the prince, who, if he may use constraint towards their bodies, cannot constrain their minds. The exigencies of the situation might necessitate further effort, but, warned he, "it is time to think of remedying the miseries of the people in order not to abandon the ship to the violence of the winds, to imitate those prudent pilots, who in the midst of the most furious storms, do not let go the helm, so as to prevent by whatever device possible the impending shipwreck."[1] The Advocate-General, Omer Talon, was far less accommodating, in spite of his official position, which obliged him to demand the registration of the edicts. Plain speaking is not often practised, in public at least, in the presence of kings, who claim special privileges even from truth. On this occasion truth would not for once be imposed out of court, and Omer Talon spoke very pointedly, though very disagreeably. He showed in very realistic terms the reverse side of the picture which the government and the diplomatists, in their desire for aggrandisement, sought to veil or ignore. "It is pretended that it is not easy to conclude peace with the enemy, that it is easier to force him thereto by arms than to subject him by reason, that it is advantageous to the State to provide the means of winning victories, which have added new provinces to our frontiers. Whether these professions are true or false, we can tell your majesty that victories do not diminish one whit the misery of the people, that there are whole provinces where the people only manage to keep body and soul together with a little oat cake and bran bread. These palms and laurels, to increase which the people is so cruelly oppressed, are not counted among the food plants serviceable to life. Sire, all the provinces are impoverished and exhausted . . . ; there remains nothing to your subjects but their souls, and if they had been saleable, they would long ago have been put to the hammer." There was more of this disagreeable strain to come when the speaker fell foul of these beds of justice. "Such a despotic government would be good among the northern barbarians, who have only the form of man. But in France, the most civilised country of the world, the people has

[1] Mémoires de Mathieu Molé, iii. 199.

always claimed to be born free and to live as true Frenchmen."[1] With this sting, the boy king and his mother were fain to withdraw, asking themselves, no doubt, whether there was ever before such an eccentric and unconscionable advocate-general in France. On the morrow the Court of Requests invoked the intervention of the other chambers to prevent the edict, which prejudiced their interests, from being put in execution, on the pretext that as it was illegal to create new offices during the minority of the king, the *lit de justice* was a vain formality. In response, the Parliament resolved, in defiance of the *lit de justice*, to consider anew the edicts which they had voted under compulsion. Enraged at this indication of independence, the regent demanded to know whether the Parliament pretended a right to question an edict verified in the presence of the king, and thus limit the royal authority. The Parliament disclaimed any intentions of trenching on the sovereign power, but none the less continued its examination, in spite of the contempt of the regent, who could not restrain her disgust at "this *canaille* who takes upon itself to reform the State." The friction between it and the government was increased by the quarrel over the renewal of the *paulette*, or tax on the incomes of the magistrates, which was reassessed every nine years. Emery demanded from the Chamber of Accounts, the Court of Aids, the Grand Council, and the Provincial Parliaments, a sum equivalent to four years' salary. To obviate the opposition of the Parliament of Paris, he exempted its members from this exaction, but the Parliament refused to be bribed, and on the 13th May 1648, joined the three courts, which were supported by the municipality, in an organised and determined resistance.[2] In spite of a decree[3] interdicting this union as injurious to the royal authority, and directing the arrest and exile of several of the deputies, the various courts continued to act in concert. They were strengthened in their resolution by the popular sympathy. While the secretary of State Guénégaud, the bearer of a second decree,[4] dissolving the union, was greeted with threatening cries by the populace, and compelled to beat a hasty retreat (15th June), the Parliament, on the other hand, was the object of an enthusiastic demonstration in passing through the streets on the following day to listen to the threatening reprimand of the chan-

[1] Abridged from Mémoires d'Omer Talon (Petitot), ii. 114-121.

[2] Isambert, xvii. 69. Cf. Mémoires de Mathieu Molé, iii. 104 *et seq.*; Mémoires du Cardinal de Retz, ii. 192-197; Mémoires de Madame de Motteville (Petitot), ii. 324-358.

[3] Isambert, xvii. 69.

[4] *Ibid.*, xvii. 70.

cellor.[1] Instead of complying with the prohibition to assemble, the Parliament met on the 25th June to petition for the revocation of the obnoxious decrees.[2] The royal anger seemed only to add greater verve to the popular orators. The Palace of Justice was transformed, under the inspiration of a new-born zeal for the public welfare, into a second Forum, in which the misery of the people and the exhaustion of the State were eloquently denounced. "'Tis no longer a question of our own interests, but of the welfare of the people," cried these would-be tribunes. "It is necessary to reform the disorders of the State as well as defend the legitimate authority of the Parliaments, and the other courts in the domains of police and finance, against the usurpation of the minister." Anne stormed at this show of independence on the part of a legal *canaille*, as she contemptuously termed the Parliament, who presumed to limit the royal authority. The Parliament might pass for a vulgar mob in the eyes of a princess educated in the traditions of Philip II., but as a hereditary body, which to the administration of justice added the right of remonstrance against injustice, and possessed in the right of the registration of edicts a certain control over legislation and government, the Parliament was no despicable force. In conjunction with the other courts concerned with financial administration (Court of Aids, Chamber of Accounts, etc.), it could combine the whole legal and fiscal hierarchy of the kingdom in opposition to a weak or unpopular government. Richelieu might bait it at will; Mazarin, though more supple, was not the iron-willed autocrat who could frown opposition out of court. On this occasion, too, when a long war had exhausted the forbearance of the people, the Parliament was virtually the nation. As an aristocratic corporation fighting for its own interests, it could hardly expect to command popular sympathy, but at this juncture it could appeal, in its quarrel with absolutism, to the rebellious mood of the nation. Reaction bade fair to succeed now that it was championed by a powerful corporation supported by the resentment of the middle class and the peasantry, and able to count on the co-operation, for its own ends, of the nobility. The Nemesis of outraged liberty seemed to start up in the retrospect of constitutional freedom, feudal privilege, municipal and provincial rights, ignored or suppressed by the hand of despotism.

On the 27th June the deputies of the Parliament again resorted to the royal palace to remonstrate in this spirit against the arbitrary measures of the government. "Madame," said M. Molé, "the

[1] Mémoires du Cardinal de Retz, i. 198, 199. [2] *Ibid.*, xvii. 70.

greatest advantage which the sovereign can possess is to reign by the love of his subjects, and he cannot exercise a more pernicious power than to secure obedience by terror. It is a fatal moment when the royal majesty is no longer regarded with the tender and veritable sentiments which it impresses in the hearts of the people, but is simply an instrument by which others obtain what they desire, whether just or not." The intrepid speaker, whom Cardinal de Retz lauded as the most courageous man of the century,[1] thereafter launched into an indictment of the arbitrary and intolerable tactics of the regent's ministers, and warned the queen of the storm these ministers were conjuring. "In striking at the Parliament and the people," cried he, "these men strike at the royal authority, which is so diminished that there are no other means left of arresting the course of their disorders than the judgment of the nation, which will know how to take vengeance for its wrongs."[2]

This bold deliverance shook the court, and impressed Mazarin with the necessity of concession. Revolution in the face of national bankruptcy and a European war was too serious a menace to play with. At his instigation the regent capitulated to the refractory reformers, and approved the union of the deputies of the Parliament with those of the other courts as a committee of reform. The deputies accordingly met in the Chamber of St Louis on the 30th June to review the state of the nation, and draw up a programme of reform to be submitted to the Parliament and placed by it before the government. Their debates lasted throughout the month of July, and their labours amounted to little short of a revolution.[3] They demanded the suppression of the office of intendant as a usurpation of the functions of the governors and the other members of the old administrative hierarchy. The wisdom of restoring the regimen of a myriad of officials, whose exactions the people had only too good reason to keep in regretful remembrance, was very questionable, but the same objection could not be made to the demand for the reduction of the *tailles*, the suppression of all taxes imposed without the verification of the edicts by the Parliament, which should enjoy ample liberty of recording its votes, the prohibition of the creation of offices and other arbitrary financial expedients, except by free permission of Parliament, the establishment of a chamber of justice to judge abuses in the collection and administration of the revenue, the public auction of the farms-general of the taxes, the restitution of their fraudulent gains by corrupt officials and financiers, the revocation of obnoxious

[1] Mémoires, i. 316. [2] Mémoires de Mat. Molé, iii. 225-230.
[3] See Isambert, xvii. 72-84; cf. Mémoires de M. Molé, iii. 230-239.

edicts, the revision of the alienation of the royal domain, granted in favour of the courtiers and their *protégés*, the abolition of commercial monopolies, the reform of justice by the suppression of special judicial commissions, and the fair trial of prisoners. The deputies, in claiming for the Parliament the control of taxation as well as the wardenship of justice, virtually attributed to it the functions of the States-General. In attacking usurpation and abuse they were themselves usurping powers which did not, in all their extent, belong to them. Even the States-General had only the power of presenting statements of claims for the royal approval or refusal. Nevertheless, as it was the only body fitted to deal adequately with the rampant abuses of misgovernment, it was doing good service to France in insisting on rights and demanding guarantees, which would substantially have resulted in parliamentary government by subjecting the administration to the control of a weighty body of enlightened, if not exactly of popular, opinion.

The Parliament approved the demands of its representatives, and succeeded in extorting from an impotent government, which had vainly attempted to propitiate public opinion by the dismissal of Emery and the substitution of Marshal La Meilleraye as superintendent of finance, a reluctant sanction of this programme of reform.[1] "I am going," said the queen, "to throw roses at their heads, but when they have settled themselves to their duties, I shall know how to make them repent it." On the 31st July Louis accordingly held a *lit de justice* to concede the greater part of these reforms.[2] In return the queen emphasised "the royal supremacy," which was under no obligation to seek the co-operation of the Parliament in the work of government. The king is master; the Parliament, in effect, the mere instrument of his will. "His majesty commands the observance of his ordinances in virtue of his full power and prerogative." To this lecture on the duty of submission the majority of the Parliament listened in glacial silence, and Omer Talon, the advocate-general, was once more inconsistently outspoken. "Without the people," said he quietly, "the State could not subsist, and the monarchy would be only an idea." His discourse was practically a direct negative of the arrogant affirmations of the preamble of the royal declaration. He boldly assumed the right of the Parliament to champion the cause of the nation against misgovernment, and arrogated to it the functions of the States-General in virtue of the prescription of custom. "The laws," said he, "are the corner-stones of kingdoms;

[1] Royal declarations of the 11th, 13th, and 18th July.

[2] Isambert, xvii. 86-89; Mémoires de M. Molé, iii. 236-239.

the monuments of that alliance which regulates the submission of the subjects to their sovereign, and the protection which the sovereign owes his subjects. Formerly the will of the kings of France was not executed by the people until it was subscribed by all the magnates of the kingdom, the princes and officers of the Crown. We enjoy this power which the prescription of time has authorised and the people honour with its respect. Our resistance in public affairs ought not to be interpreted as disobedience, but as the effect of our devotion to duty. To constrain the royal authority to act in accordance with the laws, to make, as saith the Scripture, a kingdom of the law, is not to diminish that authority."[1] The advocate-general's constitutional history might be very shaky. To constitute a body of lawyers, which had originally been merely the king's assessors in the dispensation of justice, into the authoritative representative of the three orders of the State, would not pass muster from the constitutional point of view. The spirit of his discourse was at any rate, for the time being, the spirit of the people, who had looked on in chilly silence as the court passed to the Palace of Justice,[2] and the Parliament did not hesitate to act on the assumption of the advocate-general. It was the only body capable of trying conclusions with the government, which had shown little enough consideration for the constitutional rights of the States-General in its striving to make the Crown absolute, and it was by no means disposed to leave the work of practical reform in the hands of Mazarin. The internal *régime* of the minister, which had only heightened the discontent bequeathed by that of Richelieu, and could no longer muzzle it, held out no reassuring prospect of amelioration. Moreover, the royal declaration had studiously ignored the demand for liberty of suffrage and a guarantee against arbitrary arrest and imprisonment. On the morrow, therefore, Broussel, anticipating the temper of 1789, rose to exhort his fellow-reformers to continue their task. "Let us continue to deliberate." After lengthy debates and conferences with the Duke of Orleans, the regent's representative, the Parliament appointed a committee on the 5th August to report on the royal declaration. The duke was fain to content himself with the concession that the general assembly of the chambers should cease pending the report of this committee. On the 17th August the report was ready, and on re-assembling the chambers launched into a discussion of it, to resolve finally to remonstrate against certain clauses of the declaration and decree the suppression of others.[3] M. d'Orleans was meanwhile

[1] Abridged from Mémoires d'Omer Talon, ii. 230-236.

[2] Mémoires de Retz, i. 203.

[3] Mémoires de Molé, iii. 240-247.

exerting himself to protract the discussion in order to gain time for the *coup* which the queen was meditating. Anne of Austria had not forgotten her secret resolution to make "these mutineers" of the long robe repent their doings, and the victory of Lens, gained by Condé on the 20th August, furnished her with an opportunity. On the 26th Louis and the court proceeded in state to Notre Dame to chant a Te Deum in honour of the victory. The citizens abandoned themselves to the celebration of the auspicious event, when suddenly the report ran that Broussel, Councillor of the Grand Chamber, and Blancmenil, President of the Inquests, had been arrested and carried off, the former to St Germain, the latter to Vincennes. Instantly the joy of the people was changed into rage and revolt. "The people burst into a fury," says Retz, "they rushed about, they shouted, they closed the shops."[1] Marshal de la Meilleraye, at the head of the guards, whom he had placed at the Pont Neuf in view of the emergency, was surrounded by a furious mob, who threw stones as well as curses at the soldiers. Men and women by the thousand blocked the principal streets, determined to resist the perfidy of the court and compel the release of its magistrates. It was at this stage that an extraordinary personage, Jean François Paul de Gondy, coadjutor to his uncle the Archbishop of Paris, better known to history as the Cardinal de Retz, appeared on the scene. Gondy was naturally specially interested in this affair from his ecclesiastical position, but the true secret of his zealous interference at this juncture lay, not in his pastoral solicitude for his flock, but in his ambition to play a master *rôle* and make himself indispensable in the government of France. He had been busily intriguing with the popular party for his own ends, and now saw the chance of dominating the court and securing Mazarin's place. It was with this motive that he directed his steps to the Palais Royal, followed by "an infinite multitude," crying, "Broussel, Broussel," and accompanied by the Marshal de la Meilleraye. Gondy, thus escorted, entered the audience chamber of the palace with the expectation of instant triumph. He has described the scene with that vivacity, sparkle, and insight which enable him to excel every memoir writer of his time. He depicts the efforts of the queen, Mazarin, Orleans, the courtiers, to veil their embarrassment and their perplexity with inimitable skill and not a little humour. According to the cardinal, each was playing the hypocrite with all the art of which the confusion of the hour left him master, but he forgets to tell us that the greatest hypocrite of all was the cardinal himself. The most amusing trait of the story is, in fact, his

[1] Mémoires, i. 210.

own affected innocence. "I played the innocent in the comedy," says the cardinal.[1] The queen and Mazarin evidently knew a good deal more of his intrigues and his true character than he gave them credit for, and for a time dissembled their uneasiness by their ill-concealed contempt for the would-be saviour of the State. Anne of Austria was at first implacable. "You would have me release Broussel; I would rather strangle him with these two hands" (holding them out menacingly towards Gondy), "and those who——" Here Mazarin intervened and cut short the dangerous sentence. Unabashed, the coadjutor waited till she had regained composure, and at length succeeded in impressing her with the seriousness of the situation. Of that there could be no doubt. The chancellor, the lieutenant-colonel of the guards, and the civil lieutenant came in breathless and palefaced to confirm the coadjutor's story, and at last Mazarin commanded him to go forth and promise the liberty of Broussel on condition that the people forthwith ceased their hostile demonstrations. The coadjutor accordingly, accompanied once more by the marshal, departed on his mission, conscious master of the situation. "Vive le roi," "Liberty to Broussel," shouted the marshal. The more remote portion of the crowd, misunderstanding his words, raised the cry to arms. Uproar and brandishing of weapons followed, during which the marshal aimed his pistol at and shot a man who had menacingly drawn his sword. In the ensuing fight the coadjutor and the marshal were torn asunder, and finally Gondy was felled by a blow on the head. Regaining his feet, he managed to draw off the mob towards the Halles, while the marshal retreated to the palace, and finally his oratory succeeded in bringing about the temporary cessation of the clamour. Thereupon, followed by a vast crowd, he again repaired to the palace. "Here is the man, madam, to whom I owe my life, and your majesty the safety of the guard, and perhaps that of the royal palace," said the marshal, presenting Gondy to the queen, who smiled ironically. "If the people has been as furious as you would make me believe," was the retort, "how comes it that it has been quieted in so short a time?" Evidently still suspicious of the honest Gondy's tactics; but the marshal did not leave her in doubt as to the merits of his action in restoring order at any rate. "Madam," said he, "if you do not set Broussel at liberty there will not remain one stone upon another of your palace to-morrow." Anne of Austria was not to be frightened by the spectre of revolution. "Go and take your repose, monsieur," said she, addressing Gondy, "you have worked marvellously well."

[1] Mémoires, i. 213

This ironic sally was too much for the patriotic coadjutor, who, seeing the bubble of his ambition vanish at the touch of the royal sarcasm, burst forth, gnashing his teeth and swearing vengeance.[1] He still poses in his memoirs, however, as the restorer of order, and if we may trust his own assertions, made another pacific speech to the multitude from the roof of his coach, and claims the merit of thereby having saved Paris from a night of riot and pillage. The effect was due more to the fact that it was now supper-time, and the Parisian agitator of those days could not consent to forego a meal even for the sake of the public weal. "I had not much difficulty in persuading the people to quietness," adds the coadjutor, "because the hour of supper was at hand. This circumstance may appear ridiculous, but it is the fact. I have observed at Paris in time of popular ferment that the most hot-headed patriot will not allow himself to miss a meal."[2]

The coadjutor would fain still keep on the mask in his memoirs, and persuade posterity that he was up to this point a true patriot and loyal lover of order, and had done noble service to the court and the country. But what thanks? The true patriot and honest man had made a fool of himself, or rather had been befooled by the court for his pains, as presently appeared. Arrived at his episcopal palace and buried in reflection on the situation, "enveloping himself in his duty," in rushed M. de Montrésor to tell him that he was held responsible at the palace for the riot which he had done his patriotic utmost to quell! Worse still, in came his friend Laignes immediately after from the royal supper-table to tell him that Bautru, Nogent, and other creatures of Mazarin, had been amusing the company for two hours at his expense, and keeping the queen and her guests in a roar of laughter at their sallies. To abuse a true patriot in this fashion was intolerable, yet the coadjutor consoled himself with the testimony of a good conscience, when finally Argenteuil appeared to inform him that the queen had resolved on his banishment, and would to-morrow order the Parliament to Montargis, and make an end of reform and riot for evermore! Only after this indisputable proof of perfidy and ill-usage did the veracious and long-suffering coadjutor take the resolve to pay back the trick played upon him by another far more effective. "Before mid-day to-morrow," said he to his sceptical friends, who began to bewail his fate, "I shall be master of Paris." His friends might well be sceptical. Paris was hushed in sleep; not a soul in the streets. Everything seemed to augur that the sparks of sedition had

[1] "Je fusse ce que l'on appelle enragé" (Mémoires, i. 221)

[2] Mémoires, i. 222.

been effectually quenched. Nevertheless, Paris was in a few hours all astir with revolutionary fervour, armed to the teeth with every variety of weapon, mediæval and modern, working its hardest at the erection of barricades—that formidable resort of the Parisian instinct at such a time of excitement and popular dread. The honest patriot had been busy, too, the while, issuing his orders to his trusty agents, to Miron, master of accounts, and colonel of the quarter of St Germain, L'Épinai, Argenteuil, and others, to place armed guards at the Pont de Nesle and all other important points, and to raise the citizens to defend liberty against the machinations of the court. Miron and his associates had carried out their instructions so skilfully, that when a detachment of the Swiss Guards attempted to charge the crowd at the Pont de Nesle they were scattered in flight with the loss of considerably over a score in killed. The Chancellor Seguier, proceeding to the Palace of Justice with an order to the Parliament to refrain now, and for the future, from meddling with public affairs, and to pronounce an interdict against it in case of the refusal of instant obedience, barely escaped being torn in pieces on the Quai des Augustins, by seeking a temporary refuge in the Hôtel D'O. Here he locked himself up in a back room, which the mob fortunately overlooked in its search, until he was rescued by a detachment of life-guards. Gondy had proved one too many for the queen and Mazarin, who saw their *coup* frustrated, while Paris was shouting "Vive the coadjutor," and "Away with Mazarin," and a hundred thousand men were threatening instant revolution, if Broussel were not released. The popular and triumphant coadjutor does not adequately explain how he managed to work this miracle. The honest patriot was doubtless, as he would have us believe, a very innocent person throughout all this imbroglio.[1]

It was now the turn of the Parliament to move. The first president—a far more respectable figure than the coadjutor—had twice on the previous day gone to the palace to implore the liberation of Broussel and his fellow-prisoner. Instead of concession, the queen had curtly forbidden him to assemble the chambers, and made light of his warnings.[2] In the morning the Parliament voted a decree of arrest against the Sieur de Comminges, who had arrested Broussel, and the arraignment of the queen's advisers in this matter, and resolved to proceed to the palace with full ceremonial. The appearance of the procession was greeted with cries of "Vive the Parliament," "Liberty to Broussel," and the barricades were instantly

[1] For these events see Mémoires de Rétz, i. 210-232.

[2] Mémoires de Molé, iii. 250-253.

opened to allow it to pass. Anne received the members in the audience chamber surrounded by the king, Mazarin, the Duke of Orleans, the fugitive chancellor, the Duke of Longueville, and other great persons. M. Molé dispensed with the usual compliments to royalty and its representatives on this occasion. He went direct to the point. "In the midst of the public rejoicings over a great victory, it has pleased his majesty to command the imprisonment of several members of the Parliament for no other cause than that of having given their votes freely. Take away the liberty of suffrage from the Parliament and it loses its name; it falls from its functions; all the laws are violated and the public security destroyed. Such is the exasperation of the people that the utmost violence is to be apprehended, and the only means of allaying the ferment and preserving the monarchy from damage, is the instant liberation of the prisoners." The regent still persisted in despising the argument from the threatening attitude of the populace, and answered, with an explosion of rage, "I know well that there is riot in the city, but you, gentlemen of the Parliament, will answer for the consequences that may result therefrom, you, your wives, and your children."[1] "We should be false to our office and our duty," returned Molé, "if we did not insist that the demand of the people be granted. We are only at the commencement of the evil. To resist the popular will is to invite the worst extremes, ay, even the destruction of the monarchy." The queen still refused to give way, and the first president emphasised once more the reality of the danger. "The popular fury, once loosened by the refusal of this request, will stop at no excess, will pillage and massacre without restraint. Who in this contingency, madam, will guarantee this palace and your persons from its violence?" Still the queen would not yield, and with a final negative, rose and walked imperiously out of the audience chamber into her cabinet, banging the door after her.[2] Thither Molé followed her to beg compliance on his knees, and to point out that the situation had altogether changed since the decree of arrest had been issued, and admitted no other remedy. Mazarin, the Duke of Longueville, Marshal L'Hôpital, Henrietta Maria, Queen of England, whose experience of revolution had taught her the folly of blind obstinacy, united their supplications to his, and after an hour's excited consultation with the ministers, Anne gave way and accorded

[1] Mémoires de Retz, i. 233. Molé does not give the words, but says that the queen spoke very angrily, and threatened to hold the Parliament responsible for the consequences (iii. 258). Madame de Motteville glosses over the scene (Mémoires, iii. 18).

[2] *Ibid.*, i. 233.

the liberty of Broussel on condition that the Parliament ceased its assemblies till after Martinmas. The Parliament agreed to take the answer into consideration. Some of the members proposed to hold the sitting in the great gallery of the palace; others to return to the Palace of Justice in order not to seem to be constrained in their deliberations. The latter proposition having gained the approval of the majority, the procession set out on its return journey. It found the people waiting in breathless expectation of the good news. When it became apparent that there had been a transaction, and that the liberation of Broussel was not yet assured, the crowd broke into a storm of opprobrious cries. By this time the procession had reached the third barricade at the Croix du Trahoir. Here the populace refused to make way, and a man, pointing his halberd at the breast of the first president, shouted, "Return, traitor, and if you would escape massacre, bring back Broussel, or Mazarin and the chancellor as hostages." In the confusion of the moment five of the vice-presidents and about fifty of the councillors slipped away into the crowd. Molé showed a resolute front, and preserved his dignity and his composure amid the tumult of imprecations and the brandishing of weapons which greeted the return of the discomfited procession. The regent could no longer doubt the gravity of the situation, though she still insisted on the condition that the Parliament should cease its political assemblies for a time. There was nothing for it but to have recourse to the expedient of deliberating on the spot, and consent to the queen's terms, while reserving the right to consider the execution of certain measures connected with taxation (the *tarif* and the *rentes*). Anne then ordered two carriages to be made ready to fetch the two prisoners, and, headed by these, the procession set forth once more. At this spectacle the people roared itself hoarse. "Vive le roi," "Broussel is free." The entry of the venerable councillor on the morrow was a triumphant march, and in saluting the popular hero with its acclamations, the people had the rare satisfaction of feeling that his triumph was also theirs, and, it should not be forgotten, that of the coadjutor. It was the victory of the cause which Broussel represented, rather than that of the man, which the people celebrated, for Broussel, though a respectable magistrate, was not in himself a great genius. A contemporary scribe cannot repress her astonishment that "a person of so little capacity should have gained so great a reputation."[1]

[1] Mémoires de Mdlle. de Montpensier (Petitot), ii. 28. I have taken the description of this scene mainly from Molé, the chief actor in it (iii. 255-267). His memoirs are exceedingly valuable for the history of the Parliamentary Fronde.

The Parliament resumed consideration of the subject of taxation, and succeeded in obtaining the promise of the reduction of the *tailles* and other alleviations in accordance with the declaration of the 31st July.[1] At the audience of the 3rd September, at which this concession was made, the regent appeared to be in the most benevolent and accommodating mood,[2] but she resented the continued assembly of the chambers, and was secretly planning revenge. She would summon Condé to her aid, retire to Rueil, and compel the submission of Parliament and capital by force. Early on the morning of the 13th September the king and Mazarin slipped out of Paris. Anne followed a few hours later, and suspicion and ferment again took possession of the people.[3] The departure of the court was ostensibly for the benefit of the king's health. The arrest of M. de Chavigny and the exile of M. de Chateauneuf, ex-ministers, which followed this move on the 18th September,[4] belied this pretext, and seemed to confirm the suspicion of another *coup*. The coadjutor was again busy fomenting alarm by his intrigues,[5] and, at his instigation, the president, Viole, denounced in the Parliament the arbitrary arrest of Chavigny and Chateauneuf as a blow aimed at the liberty of all, and summoned his colleagues to take measures for the public security.[6] The president, Novion, followed with the demand that the edict of 1617 against Concini, which interdicted foreigners from taking part in the government, should be put in execution. The demand was aimed directly at Mazarin, and as it amounted to an ultimatum to the court and must lead to civil war, the first president succeeded, on the 22nd September, in passing a decree that the regent should be requested by a deputation to return with the king to Paris, and the Duke of Orleans and the Prince of Condé, who had arrived at Rueil on the 19th,[7] invited to be present on the following day, when the proposal should be taken into consideration once more. In reply to the deputation, the queen disavowed any intention of using force against the capital, and complained of the continued assembly of the chambers, contrary to stipulation. She had only too good reason for the arrest of the prisoners, for which she was responsible to God only. The Duke of Orleans

[1] Mémoires de Molé, iii. 268-275.

[2] Mémoires de Mad. de Motteville, iii. 37.

[3] Mémoires de Molé, iii. 275; Mémoires de Mad. de Motteville, iii. 41, 42.

[4] Mémoires de Mad. de Motteville, iii. 44-50; Mémoires de Montglat (Petitot), ii. 134.

[5] Mémoires de Retz, i. 242-245.

[6] *Ibid.*, i. 245, 246; Mémoires de Molé, iii. 276.

[7] Histoire des Princes de Condé, v. 290.

and the Prince of Condé declined to attend, and proclaimed their determination to support the regent.[1] "If things had remained as they were before the departure of the court," returned Molé, "there would have been no cause for the continued deliberations of the chambers, but the arbitrary arrest and imprisonment of good subjects has changed the situation." On the morrow, the 23rd September, the chambers accordingly passed a decree directing the arming of the citizens and the collection of provisions in order to ensure the security of Paris, and resolved to consider the decree of 1617 on the following day.[2]

Here was a pretty *impasse*—the queen getting ready to march on the capital in the name of arbitrary right, the capital getting ready to defend itself in the name of the liberty of the subject. In her resentment at the attack on the cardinal, Anne would at first listen to no expedient short of the suppression of the rebels, and if Condé would have lent his sword, this expedient would doubtless have been tried. Condé, however, did not love the cardinal, though he despised the lawyers as a set of wrangling pedants, and did not sympathise with, or understand the defence of liberty, was, in fact, deep in the intrigues of the coadjutor for Mazarin's overthrow. He worked to undermine his power by the underhand tactics recommended by Retz,[3] and he relied on his prestige and influence with the queen to effect his purpose. He would cajole the queen, therefore, cajole even the cardinal, and intervene between them and the hot-headed spirits among the lawyers by way of conference. President Molé was not sorry to have this excuse for forestalling extremities, and during several weeks the farce of negotiation was kept up in the hope of arriving at an understanding, and, as Condé and the coadjutor hoped, of ultimately outmanœuvring their friend, the cardinal.

These negotiations took place at St Germain between the Dukes of Orleans and Longueville, Condé, the chancellor, and Marshal Meilleraye, the superintendent of finance, on the one hand, and the representatives of the chambers on the other. The subjects discussed were the general reforms which had already been debated in the Chamber of St Louis, particularly the burning question of the right of arbitrary imprisonment. In its defence of the liberty of the subject, in its protest against oppressive and illegal taxation, the Parliament of Paris stood for the same rights, and strove to vindicate the same principles, as a far more august and powerful Parliament had championed so decisively during these very years of restiveness

[1] Histoire des Princes de Condé, v. 290, 291.

[2] Isambert, xvii. 90, 91.

[3] See Mémoires, i. 248-253.

in France. At Paris, as at Westminster, it is the right of the subject to resist oppression and enjoy personal freedom and political rights that is vindicated by the representatives of the people, and though the Parliament of Paris could not constitutionally claim to represent the nation, and had not the spirit, because it had not the power, of that of Westminster, the language of its orators is as positive on these points as that of a Pym or a Hampden. "The right of arbitrary exile and imprisonment," insisted the chancellor, "is necessary to the maintenance of the royal authority and the security of the State." The words might have fallen from the lips of Strafford and other champions of Stuart absolutism, for the same contention was adjudged the law of the land by the judges in the pay of Charles I. "In all ages and in all States, whether monarchic or republican," continued he, "this power has been exercised. There is a great difference between public and private justice. In the case of the latter, it is only right that a prisoner should have the benefit of an immediate trial; in the case of public justice, it may be advisable for the sovereign to imprison on mere suspicion, and even if the innocent suffer, it is expedient for the State that the sovereign should exercise this power." President Molé appealed to the ancient laws of France in proof of his contention that no subject could be prosecuted except by the regular course of justice. "There might come exceptional occasions when it would be difficult to observe the formalities of law, but the law ought to be explicitly recognised in this matter as the rule in ordinary times. The sovereign always diminishes his authority by violence." Orleans attempted to shelve the matter by introducing the subject of the finances. The Parliamentary deputies refused to be hoodwinked, and demanded the recognition of the liberty of the subject as a preliminary to further discussion. "Preliminary," cried Condé hotly, "preliminary is not fit word in the mouths of subjects speaking to their masters. If I mean that the queen shall be constrained to restore M. de Chavigny to liberty, I shall know how to compel respect for the royal authority and the dignity of the princes of the blood." President Viole protested that he had not used the word in this sense, but the irascible Condé only shouted the more wildly, and finally stalked out of the room. On the morrow the chancellor announced a compromise. The queen was willing to grant the request as far as the members of the Parliament were concerned, but reserved the exercise of the absolute power of the Crown as far as the princes and the members of the royal court were concerned. Molé refused to entertain the proposal, refused, too, to accept an obligation on the part o

the king to bring such prisoners to trial within three months. The chancellor remained firm, and the deputies referred the point to the Parliament. The Parliament would not hear of it. To grant this privilege would be to set a premium on the death of such unfortunate persons, insisted Blancmenil. Stick to the twenty-four hours, according to law, or place the State under the tyranny of the ministers. Back went the deputies to St Germain with this resolution. "It only means one promise more," said Mazarin, "which need not be kept," and with this secret reservation, the queen at last gave way, and accorded the article of public security, as it was called, without restriction. This and the other articles agreed to were then embodied by the Parliament in a declaration—a modern French Magna Charta—to which Molé succeeded in extorting the regent's signature on the 22nd October.[1]

Anne, Louis, and Mazarin returned to Paris, and everybody was satisfied—everybody except Anne and Mazarin, who felt their return as a humiliation, and could not forgive the triumph of a couple of hundred lawyers over the absolute government of a great nation. The Parliament was, too, conscious of its triumph, and was not disposed to be more considerate, in consequence, in its treatment of regent and minister. It soon found a fresh pretext for resorting to the assembly of the chambers in the contravention by the cardinal of the declaration of October in the matter of taxation. On the 19th December it resolved to investigate these infractions,[2] and another chapter in this interminable wrangle began. Its zeal was not lessened by the maladroit intervention of the Prince of Condé, who ended as usual by getting into a towering passion and using high and threatening language (16th December), and by the blunders of Mazarin, who made no attempt to court the goodwill of its members. By the New Year Paris was again in a ferment. Everybody became a politician and a partisan, and the smallest shopkeeper discoursed on the affairs of the nation to his customers with as much eloquence and zeal as he extolled his wares. "Every one," says Madame de Motteville, "was infected by the passion for the public welfare, which he esteemed more than his individual advantage." There was such a babble in Paris all day long, such a plethora of excited politicians in the streets, that the regent again bethought herself of the expediency of flight, especially as the Parliament refused to cease its political assemblies and its investigations. On

[1] Mémoires de Molé, iii. 282-292; Isambert, xvii. 92-97; Mémoires de Motteville, iii. 64-95.

[2] Isambert, xvii. 98.

the night of the 5th-6th January 1649 she migrated with the king, the cardinal, and the whole court, to St Germain.[1] "Grand tumult in consequence," remarks M. de Molé, who immediately summoned the Parliament to deliberate. Anon, the deputies of the municipality appeared to announce that they had received letters from the king, the Duke of Orleans, and the Prince of Condé, ascribing their departure to the seditious attitude of certain members of the Parliament, who had intrigued with the enemies of the State and conspired to seize the person of his majesty.[2] On the back of this communication came a royal order to the Parliament to quit Paris within twenty-four hours, and repair to Montargis, on pain of prosecution for *lèse majesté* in case of refusal.[3] In these tactics the Parliament saw the hand of Mazarin, though Orleans and Condé professed in their letters to take the responsibility of advising the king on themselves. Mazarin, in truth, had assured himself of the adhesion of Condé, who, in spite of the reasonings of the coadjutor, could not control his contempt for "that legal *canaille*," and had thrown down the gauntlet in earnest. Contrary to his expectation, the Parliament did not hesitate to take it up; and after decreeing measures for the safety of Paris,[4] launched a decree of proscription against the cardinal as an enemy of the State, ordered him to leave the kingdom within eight days, and decreed the levy of the Paris militia in order to meet force with force.[5] "Starve Paris for eight days; it will soon come to reason," said Condé.[6] "How," cried he, "these bourgeoisie will dare to come out to give battle to me!" These bourgeoisie, who saw in the Parliament the champion of their liberty, were in dead earnest notwithstanding, subscribing the sinews of war, toiling day and night, under its direction, to repair the walls and drill themselves into fighting form. "If you lay siege to Paris," said Dr Guénaud to Condé, "we shall resist; for myself I will sacrifice all I have in the common cause; there are 30,000 men in Paris who are abler and more zealous than I."[7] The coadjutor, too, aided by the Duchess of Longueville, was labouring hard at his special business of intrigue, and if he failed in the meantime to secure Condé, he managed to gain his brother, the Prince of Conti, who was appointed generalissimo of the army of the capital, the Dukes of

[1] Mémoires de Molé, iii. 293-309; Mémoires de Retz, i. 260-264; Mémoires de Madame de Motteville, iii. 95-145.

[2] Isambert, xvii. 109.

[3] *Ibid.*, xvii. 110-114.

[4] *Ibid.*, xvii. 114, 115 (6th January 1649).

[5] *Ibid.*, xvii. 115 (8th January); Mémoires de Molé, iii. 309-320.

[6] Mémoires de Retz, i. 273, 274.

[7] Histoire des Princes de Condé, v. 292.

Elbœuf and Bouillon, and the Marshal de la Motte Houdancourt who became Conti's lieutenant-generals,[1] and the Dukes of Longueville and Beaufort, and was even negotiating with Fuensalda for the assistance of a Spanish force. The Parliament certainly owed the incomparable patriot no thanks for compromising its cause by such detestable tactics, and thus lending some colour of veracity to a charge graver than that of rebellion.[2] Moreover, Gondy, though a despicable character, had enormous influence as official head of the Parisian clergy, and did not neglect to pull this string against the cardinal. "I called a famous assembly of curates, canons, doctors, and monks," says he, with evident relish of the humour of the situation, "and without having once mentioned the name of the cardinal in all these conferences—always appearing on the contrary to spare him—I made him out, in eight days' time, to be the most incorrigible Jew in all Europe." After this, religion as well as patriotism could no longer stand the cardinal. The clever coadjutor even managed to keep up appearances with the regent by getting the mob to stop his carriage and carry him back to his residence, while on his way to St Germain in obedience to a royal summons. What could an ill-used patriot do but submit to force, and remain in Paris, innocent man, impotent to raise a finger in defence of the cause of order? His impotence appeared in the resolution of the Parliament against Mazarin, of which, according to his own story, he was the effective, though secret mover. The coadjutor toiled at his task day and night, perambulating the streets, in disguise, after darkness set in, exhorting the members of the Parliament and the municipality to stand fast, directing his secret agents, playing the Jansenist towards the Jansenists, the gallant towards the ladies, especially the Duchess of Longueville (for he was a terrible rake, this saintly man), in spite of his ugliness, generously scattering "pistoles" among the crowd, with the result that before long Paris was ringing with the cries, "Vive son Altesse M. D'Elbœuf," "Vive le coadjuteur," and shedding tears of joy over the noble patriots of princely rank.

From the 9th of January Paris was blockaded by Condé's troops. It was high time, therefore, to make sure of security within the walls, above all to get possession of the Bastille. There was some cannonading, but no bloodshed, before the garrison surrendered, and the whole affair, unlike the memorable attack of 1789, was nothing

[1] Mémoires de Molé, iii. 334.

[2] For these intrigues, which Retz has recounted with incomparable vivacity, see Mémoires, i. 251-308; cf. Mémoires de Molé, 324-338.

more than a pleasant excitement. "It was a funny enough spectacle," says the coadjutor, "to see the women during this famous siege, carrying their chairs into the garden of the arsenal, where the battery was placed, as they carry them to the sermon."[1] By an adroit move, the Parliament strove to identify the nation with the capital. It invited the other Parliaments of the kingdom to unite with it in resisting the despotic government of the cardinal, "who contemplated not only the destruction of the Parliament and city of Paris, but the establishment of a general tyranny over the State."[2] The appeal was not without effect. "As soon as Paris declared itself," says Retz, "the whole kingdom burst into a ferment."[3] This is hardly an exaggeration. The oppressive and maladroit measures of the government, which now attempted to outmanœuvre the Parliament by an appeal to the States-General,[4] had nurtured a national reaction as well as steeled the opposition of the capital against the system of Richelieu and Mazarin. In striking at Mazarin, the Parliament arraigned the memory of Richelieu. "Cardinal Mazarin," it complained in a lengthy remonstrance addressed to the regent on the 21st January,[5] "trained by the Cardinal Richelieu, nurtured in his ambitious maxims, and formed in his artifices, has, in succeeding to his place, likewise succeeded to his designs." The principles enunciated and defended by the Parliament in this manifesto were admirable; the charges against Mazarin were not all just and fair. It was not, for instance, correct to assert that he was prolonging the war (with Spain) in order to make himself necessary and enrich himself at the expense of the State, or that he was a traitor to the interests of the country. The nation, nevertheless, shared in this belief, and was as eager as the Parliament to take advantage of the opportunity to overthrow an arbitrary rule, which had neither the virtue of a beneficent absolutism to recommend it, nor the resources of a strong will to support it. The Parliament of Aix responded to the appeal of that of Paris by seizing D'Alais, the tyrannical governor of Provence, against whose conduct it had vainly remonstrated, and decreeing its union with that of the capital.[6] That of Rouen followed its example, and defied the royal threat of prosecution for *lèse majesté*.[7]

[1] Mémoires, i. 317. [2] Isambert, xvii. 121, 122 (18th January).

[3] Mémoires, i. 322. [4] Isambert, xvii. 144, 145. [5] *Ibid.*, xvii. 123-143.

[6] Isambert, xvii. 147, 148. For the struggle in Provence, see the interesting articles of P. Gaffarel in the Revue Historique, tome ii., entitled "La Fronde en Provence."

[7] Isambert, xvii. 155-159.

Only that of Brittany declared for the king, while insurrections at Marseilles, Amiens, Poitiers, Reims, Angers, Tours, Peronne, Mezières, showed that Paris was the champion of a popular cause, and could reckon on the support of the people.

Condé's plan of starving it failed, for the Paris militia succeeded in protecting the provisions which the peasantry of the surrounding districts brought in with alacrity. As long as the Parliament and the municipality could provide the money to pay their levies and purchase stores, the blockade must remain ineffectual. There were occasional skirmishes between the militia guarding these convoys and the royal troops, but the skill of Noirmoutier usually gained the advantage for the burgher levies in these affairs, and kept Paris resolute and good humoured by keeping the wolf from the door.[1] In their encounter with the great Condé himself at Charenton, the parliamentary generals were less fortunate. There, on the 8th February, Condé attacked Clanleu with superior numbers, and cut his force of 3,000 men in pieces before Conti, Houdancourt, and Elbœuf, whose rashness had exposed Clanleu to this disaster, could strike in to their rescue.[2] This bloody battle only embittered the situation. The cause of the people was now baptized by the blood of its martyrs, and the government had invested itself with the odium of a brutal tyranny. In its rage the populace did not pause to consider whether it was not partly the dupe of intriguing and selfish men like the coadjutor and his princely associates, who saw in the people the instrument of their factiousness and personal ambition, and were in active alliance with the arch-enemy of France. The people was not sufficiently initiated to differentiate between the honourable spirit of a Molé, the champion of parliamentary and popular rights against absolutism, and the spirit of a Gondy, the incarnation of intrigue and falsity. As we have seen, Anne and Mazarin knew enough of the tactics of the coadjutor to feel that, in resorting to force, they were vindicating patriotism as well as authority. Unhappily at the same time their obstinacy and their exalted notions of the royal power, inherited from Richelieu, unfitted them to deal sympathetically and fairly with the demands of the Parliament, and made them overbearing, insincere, and dishonest in their negotiations. They, too, had their share in the guilt of this bloodshed, and in these circumstances, accommodation now seemed out of the question.

The Parliament refused to receive a herald, despatched by the

[1] See Mémoires de Retz, i. 326 *et seq.*

[2] *Ibid.*, i. 325, 326; Histoire des Princes de Condé, v. 319, 320.

queen to announce its suppression in case of continued refusal to quit Paris in eight days, but sent a deputation to explain its action.[1] In striking contrast to its treatment of the herald was the reception accorded to the agent of the Archduke Leopold, the ostensible bearer of overtures to the Parliament, which had been fabricated by the subtle coadjutor. Gondy had hit on this expedient to render conciliation except on his own terms impossible. To its honour, the Parliament did not fall into the trap, and discredit its cause by straying in the slippery ways of the arch-intriguer. It merely resolved, after warm debates, to present the letter by deputation to the queen in order to receive the royal command relative to it. Molé, on presenting it, drew a terrible picture of the misery of the people, accruing from the anarchy of the times. "We come," said he, "to supplicate your majesty to withdraw the troops investing Paris, who have committed acts worthy of barbarians, since not only are the poor peasants, who have merited no suffering, ruined beyond recovery, the women violated, and the churches polluted, but even the holy sacrament has not been exempted from the fury of the soldiery. . . . God has not put force into the hands of sovereigns to oppress, but to preserve the people. The Parliament is guilty of no other crime than that of working for the people's welfare."[2] "I could have wished," returned the queen, "that the advice of those who did not wish to receive the envoy of the archduke had been listened to. This would have been more respectful to the king, but the action of the Parliament will not prevent me from approving every means of accommodation, consistent with the maintenance of the royal authority."[3] This answer paved the way for a new series of conferences, and the conciliatory attitude of the regent and Mazarin was intensified by the knowledge that Turenne was being tampered with by the coadjutor, was, in fact, on the point of declaring for the Parliament, and leading his army to its rescue.[4] The coadjutor was, besides, striving his hardest to deprive these conferences of a peaceful issue by exciting the fears of the crowd. "Vive le coadjuteur," "No peace," "Away with Mazarin," shouted the populace in response to Gondy and his fellow *souffleurs*,[5] who now laid heavy stakes on Turenne. Turenne, indeed, declared himself,[6] but the Parliament nevertheless continued its conferences, which at last,

[1] Mémoires de Molé, iii. 342-348.
[2] *Ibid.*, iii. 351-354; cf. Mémoires d'Omer Talon, ii. 413-421.
[3] *Ibid.*, iii. 354; Omer Talon, ii. 421; Retz, i. 366.
[4] Mémoires de Retz, i. 364 *et seq.*
[5] *Ibid.*, i. 376, 377.
[6] *Ibid.*, i. 390, 391.

on the 11th March, concluded in the Peace of Rueil. Though Gondy did not slacken his wirepulling, in reliance on Turenne, the great marshal was outwitted by the astute Mazarin, who bribed his officers to turn against him, and forced him to seek an asylum with the landgravine of Hesse.[1]

The Treaty of Rueil ratified anew the declarations of July and October 1648, annulled the hostile decrees and manifestoes of both sides, bound the chambers to cease their assemblies during the current year 1649, obliged the Parliament to disband the Parisian militia and the king to withdraw his troops from the investment of the capital, decreed a general amnesty, released all prisoners, directed the withdrawal of the emissary of the archduke, and bound the king to return to Paris at the earliest possible opportunity.[2] There were stirring debates in Parliament when the deputies submitted this treaty on the 13th March. Conti and his fellow generals loudly complained that their interests had been sacrificed. The recriminations of the generals and the deputies were interrupted by the cries of an armed mob. "Away with the Peace," "Away with Mazarin," "Fetch the king from St Germain," "Pitch all the Mazarins into the Seine," were the shouts wafted into the hall. M. Molé, with his accustomed imperturbability, "displayed," says Retz, "an invulnerable firmness, and a presence of mind, almost supernatural."[3] He took the vote as quietly as if the occasion had been an ordinary one on the resolution that the deputies should return to St Germain to treat of the interests of the generals, and to obtain the modification of certain points of the treaty, notably the prohibition of the assembly of the chambers.[4] To the proposal that he should retire by a back door, Molé spiritedly replied, "This court never hides itself, and were I to perish for it, I would not be guilty of such cowardice, which would only encourage the rioters. They would find me at my house, if they were to believe that I was afraid of them here."[5] He was as good as his word, and, preceded by the coadjutor, went calmly forth to encounter the menaces and the execrations of the mob. "The people raised a great clamour," says Retz, "we even heard cries of 'Republic,' but they refrained from violence against us."[6]

These incomparable patriots and friends of the people, Conti, Elbœuf, Bouillon, Beaufort, and a host more of highly titled individuals, put in a very big bill for their services. The government should pay for their patriotism in the shape of enhanced honours,

[1] Mémoires de Retz, i. 439.
[2] Isambert, xvii. 161-163; Mémoires de Molé, iii. 370-374.
[3] Mémoires, i. 431. [4] *Ibid.*, i. 434. [5] *Ibid.*, i. 432. [6] *Ibid.*, i. 432.

lands, pensions, and other substantial rewards. Mazarin, over whose head the edict of expulsion still threatened, was glad to pay the bill, and on the 1st April 1649, the Treaty of Rueil was verified by the Parliament.[1]

So far the Parliament had fought a good fight, because it had championed a noble cause. It had honestly and strenuously led a national reaction against the autocratic system of Richelieu and the no less autocratic and still more oppressive rule of the regent and Mazarin. It championed the protection of the people from ruinous taxation, and the protection of the individual from arbitrary imprisonment. No taxes, it insisted, should be imposed without the acquiescence of the Parliament as the guardian of justice. No person, of whatever condition, should be detained longer than twenty-four hours without examination. This was a noble work, worthy of Westminster itself, and the resolute endeavour to accomplish this work merits the admiration of posterity. Its association with selfish and designing malcontents like the coadjutor, Conti, Bouillon, Beaufort, and the rest of them, was unfortunate, as tending to obscure the nobler issues at stake. The blockade of Paris, and the menace of destruction to itself, forced it into this alliance, which, however undesirable, helped it to triumph. Unfortunately it did not tend to enable it to maintain its triumph, and still more unfortunate, its allies became its masters and its betrayers, on the renewal of the struggle, which the Treaty of Rueil was prematurely assumed to have concluded. Henceforth the parliamentary Fronde gave place to the Fronde of the princes, and the conflict for the rights of the subject became a conflict of petty interests, of partisanship against an obnoxious minister,—became, too, ridiculous, heartless, selfish, and utterly nugatory. The princes, indeed, had their notions of constitutional right as against the minister and the autocracy of the Crown. They are our old friends of the Ligue du Bien Public come to life once more, champions of the States-General, of aristocratic privilege, of factious jurisdictions. But they are personally poor creatures for the most part, acting from petty, egotistic motives, and largely deserving of contempt. Everybody is henceforth inconsistent, ridiculous, wanting in exaltation of purpose, grandeur of character, seriousness of effort. Condé and Turenne might have given respectability and even heroism to a movement in which they took a principal part, but Condé proved as unreliable and fickle a politician as he was a resourceful and resolute general, and Turenne, like him, began on one side and ended on the other, and served expediency equally with

[1] Mémoires de Molé, iii. 393-493; Mémoires de Retz, i. 434, 435, ii. 1-32.

the next. It is not by such actors, and in such circumstances, that revolutions are led to great issues. Before the Peace of Rueil the movement was inspired by enthusiasm, and led with gravity by a patriotic body of magistrates, who did not, however, forget the advantage to their corporation of acting as the champions of the nation. After the Peace of Rueil it degenerated largely into a movement of partisanship and class egotism, a movement so barren and contemptible, that for us its story is not worth spending paper and ink on. This later movement, or union of the parliamentary and aristocratic Fronde, was too artificial to last, was, in fact, but a transient combination of centrifugal elements. The nobility demanded, for instance, the convocation of the States-General; the Parliament deprecated this demand as tending to obliterate its influence. It decreed the exclusion of cardinals from the government of France, and thereby dealt a blow at the coadjutor, whose ambition it was to obtain the red hat and occupy Mazarin's place. The proposed marriage of the Prince of Conti with Mdlle. de Chevreuse never went beyond the stage of negotiation, and thus one bond of union after another was snapped under the strain of divergent aims and policies. Condé was working from the personal motive of absorbing the chief power of the State in his own hands and those of his family, and was intriguing with Spain. Mazarin saw in his ambition the menace of an oligarchic *régime* which would have meant once more the supremacy of intrigue and faction, and the abasement not only of the central authority, but of the national interest. "It is necessary to save the kingdom at whatever price,"[1] he urged the queen from his exile at Brühl. The fact is, that the man, against whom this pseudo-revolution was directed, was, with the exception of men like President Molé, the truest patriot of all, though he was the unscrupulous representative of an autocratic system.

The further history of the Fronde need not, therefore, detain us long. The court had no sooner returned to Paris in August 1649, than mutual intrigue and discontent rasped the relations of parties. The Treaty of Rueil was respected by neither side, and the provinces, where the movement was fanned by the reaction against centralisation, continued in a very sulphureous mood. Languedoc and Dauphiné reclaimed for their Provincial States the unrestricted right of voting subsidies, and refused to pay taxes. The other provinces followed their example, while Provence and Guienne continued in revolt. The men of Bordeaux not only maintained a desperate struggle against the governor of Guienne, they negotiated with

[1] Lettres, iv. 256 (9th June 1651).

Philip IV. for Spanish aid. To maintain a reformed government, or any government, in the disorganised state of the kingdom it was necessary that faction should coalesce in an honest co-operation to realise the stipulations of the Treaty of Rueil. Instead of such co-operation the further history of the Fronde is a see-saw of personal and party intrigue. Condé quarrelled with Mazarin and the leaders of the Fronde by turns, and, falling at last into the trap of the subtle minister, found a lodging in Vincennes (18th January 1650). As the result of this intrigue, and in keeping with the want of sequence or principle in the leaders, the coadjutor and Beaufort, formerly the most implacable foes of the minister, appeared at the Palais Royal as his sworn friends, the friendship of the versatile Gondy being rewarded with the cardinal's hat. Turenne, on the other hand, who had revolted on behalf of the parliamentary Fronde the year before, now hastened to the rescue of the imprisoned Condé, the quondam general of the court against the Parliament, and even unfurled the flag of rebellion in Picardy in concert with a Spanish force under the Archduke Leopold, the governor of the Spanish Netherlands; while the Duchess of Longueville, at the head of several thousand men, defied the royal authority at Bordeaux. Civil war again devastated France, but it was a war of pure faction, in which neither patriotism nor heroism appears, and liberty and principle were betrayed by a set of petty conspirators unworthy to be their champions. Mazarin, twice reduced to the necessity of flight beyond the frontier, finally triumphed by the sword of Turenne. With his triumphant return to Paris in 1653, the royal authority remained supreme over Parliament, faction, and people. Mazarin's maxim, "Time and I," had vindicated the perseverance which knew how to wait for opportunity, and the skill in the management of men which could use opportunity to the greatest advantage.[1]

The war of the Fronde of the princes was a war of wits as well as of warriors. The pleasantries of the Parisian wags infused into it an element of fiasco, eminently characteristic of Parisian light-mindedness. The defeat of the regiment of the coadjutor, which, from his title of Bishop of Corinth, bore the name of the Corinthians, was laughed at as "the first to the Corinthians." Madame and her minister were the object of a large share of these witticisms as well as of the most scurrilous denunciations. The degree of high principled seriousness in the intriguing coteries of the capital may be gauged by the im-

[1] "Son esprit," says La Rochefoucauld, "etoit grand, laborieux, insinuant, et plein d'artifice; son humeur etoit souple." — Mémoires de La Rochefoucauld (Petitot), i. 374; cf. Mémoires de Madame de Motteville, ii. 245.

portance of the *rôle* played by women of loose morals, whose jealousies and shady ambitions furnish the secret of many a strange development of a serio-comic performance. These later Frondists displayed nothing of the terrible combativeness, the impassioned earnestness of the men who were engaged across the Channel in a similar struggle against the arbitrary encroachment on the rights of the subject. The movement is a movement of anarchy, rather than of reform, a mere stage demonstration, with much braggadocio, party rancour, and loud babble of conflicting verbosity. Condé hit the mark when he called the later Fronde *La guerre des pots de chambre.* While it might be a war of pleasantries to the gay, unprincipled seigneurs and their mistresses, it was none the less terrible to the people. Hear the bitter cry of the miserable peasantry of Provence, for instance, engaged in the struggle against the despotism of their governor, the Comte d'Alais, as echoed in "The Voice of the People of Provence." "We may not keep silence, in the face of posterity, over the most important of his victories, which consist in robbing the poor villagers of their money, of violating girls of the age of nine years, of massacring the tenants of the Sieur de Fuveau, of carrying off two women from the very hands of their husbands, of murdering three peasants of Auriol, after sacking this poor village, . . . of gorging themselves with wine and food and then throwing into the streets of Goddanne grain, oil, and wine, burning the forage, carrying away the cattle, implements, linen, crockery, and burning the furniture which they could not carry away."[1] And if the people earned nothing but misery from the championship of the aristocratic Frondists, it is very questionable whether the triumph of the parliamentary Fronde would have been a triumph for the people in the long run. The supremacy of a legal corporation, whose offices were both purchasable and hereditary, would have been a poor substitute for that of the States-General. Its *régime* would have been the *régime* of a hereditary and mercenary senate, which would have tended to become the slave of its corporate interests. "It was the destiny of the Parliament during the last two centuries," says M. Thierry, "to excite in the nation the desire of legitimate liberty, and to be incapable of satisfying it by anything efficacious or serious."[2]

A reminiscence of the Fronde is perceptible in the struggle with Spain, which Mazarin continued after the Treaty of Westphalia, and which was only concluded by the Peace of the Pyrenees. Philip IV. had found an opportune ally in the Frondists, who cannot escape

[1] La Fronde en Provence, Revue Historique, ii. 451, 452.

[2] Essai sur le Tiers État, 197.

the charge of associating their cause with that of the hereditary enemy of France, and thus sacrificing their patriotism to their selfishness and their party rancour. Condé, worsted in the conflict with the royal forces, carried his resentment to the length of entering the Spanish service, and aggravating rebellion against the regent and the cardinal by treason to the nation. The lack of harmony between him and the Archduke Leopold diminished the danger of this unnatural and unpatriotic alliance, and the genius of Turenne neutralised that of his former great colleague in victory. The success of Mazarin's diplomacy in throwing Cromwell's Ironsides into the scale against the Spaniards contributed materially to give the advantage to Turenne. The price of this alliance—the cession of Dunkirk to England—was more than compensated by the advantages accruing to France from the Treaty of the Pyrenees (7th November 1659). By that treaty Louis XIV. gained a queen, France a considerable acquisition of territory, and Mazarin the glory of supplementing the advantages obtained by the Peace of Westphalia. The cession of Artois, Roussillon, Clermont, Bar, and part of Hainault, Flanders, and Luxemburg, and the marriage of Philip's eldest daughter, Maria Theresa, to Louis XIV., crowned the exertions of the subtle Italian, who conducted on an island in the river Bidassoa the long and tortuous negotiations with the Spanish minister, Don Luis de Haro. The League of the Rhine, which he formed in the preceding year (14th August 1658), confirmed about the same time the influence of France in Western Germany. The much maligned cardinal, hated both as an alien adventurer and as the successful vindicator of Richelieu's system, ill deserved the hostility of France as far as the success of his foreign policy was concerned. Territorial aggrandisement at least justified the saying that if his language was not French, his heart was. His devotion to the political interests of the country of his adoption mastered even his ambition in a personal affair, in which ambition would have seduced most men. He resisted the gratification of the passion which Louis had conceived for his niece, Maria Mancini, and instead of yielding to the importunities of his sovereign, almost forced him, from reasons of public utility, to seek a matrimonial alliance beyond the Pyrenees. The hope of further aggrandising France by the union of the French and Spanish crowns appealed more strongly to the mind of the statesman than the prospect of family greatness to the self-interest of the man. In pressing for the hand of the Infanta he was happily not successful in resisting the inexorable condition of the renunciation of her right to the Spanish throne, posited by Don Luis, but that point he could

leave, with a not too scrupulous shrewdness, to the decision of future events. He had got the handle; other hands, if not his, would know how to use it.

In regard to Mazarin's internal administration after the Fronde, the hostile criticism of his contemporaries is better deserved. "History," said the cardinal over confidently, "will have nothing to say of me but good, if it wishes to speak the truth." History has, nevertheless, much to censure. It should, however, not be forgotten that a minister, who had to maintain a long struggle with intestine disorder as well as with the foreign enemy, had not a fair chance of proving his powers as an administrator, and that when the pressure of war was relaxed, there came a burst of prosperity. Commerce and industry began to revive, and the restoration of the office of intendant, which the Parliament had abolished, was a step fitted to secure order and efficacious administration. Mazarin deserves at least the credit of eschewing some of the arbitrary expedients of his predecessor. If he crushed the Parliament as a political force, he did not seek to infringe its judicial functions by the creation of special commissions of justice in the service of his resentment. In this respect he compares most favourably with Richelieu. He was too politic to be vindictive. Some of the bitterest of his opponents experienced not only his clemency, but his generosity, in the honours and places which he conferred on them. Even Condé, whose rehabilitation was one of the stipulations of the Treaty of the Pyrenees, lived to be among the number of his friends. But while by his mildness and his skill in the management of men, he disarmed the rancour of several of the most conspicuous of the Frondists, he did not, unfortunately, profit by his experiences of a four years' civil war to retrench internal abuses. Colbert, who enjoyed and profited by his patronage, pronounced him a novice in administration. "It is indubitable that, if the cardinal was a master in diplomacy and foreign policy, he was ignorant of internal affairs." Under the auspices of the brilliant, but unscrupulous finance minister, Fouquet, the system of corruption and pillage, which had contributed to bring about the revolt of the Parliament, continued to the end of Mazarin's ministry. Instead of repressing the shameless traffic in the public revenue, perpetrated by his resourceful subordinate, the cardinal patronised, and even participated in it.[1] He amassed an enormous fortune, not merely, like Richelieu, by an accumulation of lucrative posts, but by acts of positive brigandage. Not content with helping himself liberally out

[1] It was after his return from exile that he gave full rein to his avarice; see Mémoires de Madame de Motteville, ii. 246.

of State funds, his avarice descended to speculation, for his personal profit, on the supplies delivered to the royal household and the army, and to participation in the pensions which he secured for his friends. He turned, too, his passionate love of gambling to account in his eagerness to increase his hoard. The adroit Fouquet conceived the chief function of his office to be to provide a constant supply of plunder for the minister, the vampires of the court, the financial speculators, and, not by any means last, the superintendent himself. The impotent Parliament, discredited and disabled by an abortive rebellion, protested in vain against his oppressive edicts. Its claim to "liberty of suffrage" in disputing the endless devices of the fertile superintendent to rob the people, was rudely rebutted by the young monarch, who, according to one story, appeared, on 13th April 1655, booted and spurred for the chase, whip in hand, and accompanied by a train of young cavaliers, to command obedience to the royal will. "The misfortunes which your assemblies have caused," said he harshly, "are well known. I command you to cease opposing my edicts. I forbid you, Mr President" (turning to the first president, Bellièvre), "to countenance this intermeddling, and you" (turning to the councillors), "to attempt it."[1] The petulant outburst of the young sovereign, whose majority had been declared four years before (7th September 1651), was the index of more than mere youthful arrogance. It was the outcome of the consciousness of power, and a determination to assert it, which already bore with impatience the tutelage of the omnipotent cardinal, and greeted with an ardent joy the day which freed him from its irksome constraint. After the 9th March 1661, the day of Mazarin's death, France passed under the domination of the man who possessed both the ability and the will to wield in person an authority restored by Henry IV., and strengthened by Richelieu and Mazarin.

SOURCES OF THIS CHAPTER.—Isambert, Recueil, xvii.; Lettres du Cardinal Mazarin pendant son Ministère, edited for the Documents Inédits by A. Chéruel; Richelieu's Lettres and Mémoires; Mémoires de Mathieu de Molé; Mémoires de La Rochefoucauld in Petitot, second series; Chéruel, Histoire de France pendant la Minorité de Louis XIV.; Mémoires du Cardinal de Retz in Petitot, second series; Gaillardin, Histoire du Règne de Louis XIV.; Mémoires d'Omer Talon in Petitot; Mémoires de Madame de Motteville in Petitot; Mémoires de Mdlle. de Montpensier in Petitot; Mémoires de Montglat in Petitot; Aumale, Histoire des Princes de Condé; Gaffarel, La Fronde en Provence, Revue Historique, ii.; Voltaire, Histoire du Parlement; Thierry, Essai.

[1] Voltaire, Histoire du Parlement, 334. Voltaire is retailing a popular story, for which no official testimony can be found, but it expresses exactly the imperious attitude of the young king towards a corporation which he associated with rebellion.

## CHAPTER XII.

### LOUIS XIV. AND COLBERT—THE ZENITH OF ABSOLUTE MONARCHY (1661-1683).

LOUIS resolved to dispense henceforth with the services of a prime minister, and to rule himself. His secretaries of State were made aware of his resolution in the clearest terms before twenty-four hours had passed. "I have resolved to be for the future my own prime minister," he told the members of his council. "You will aid me with your advice when I shall ask it. I beg and command you, Mr Chancellor, to seal nothing; you, gentlemen, secretaries of State; and you, Mr Superintendent, to sign nothing without my orders." "To whom shall I address myself?" asked a bishop, feeling his way with courtly diplomacy. "To me," was the reply. For fifty years the crown had, as it were, been in commission. For full fifty years to come it was to be worn by a king born to rule, if not altogether a born ruler.

Louis' conception of the monarchy gives the keynote of his government. He formulated his ideas on this subject in the "Memoirs and Instructions," which, with the collaboration of Pellison, he wrote for the benefit of the Dauphin.[1] With Cæsar, Frederick the Great, and Napoleon, he may claim an important place in the ranks of royal authors. Not that he merits the honour of literary distinction, for what literary merit his "Œuvres" possess they owe chiefly to his collaborateur. They are, however, of importance as an accurate reflection of his ideas on government, and form, from this point of view, extremely interesting reading. When a Louis XIV. turns author, he can count on what a far abler writer cannot always do, immortality, if not in the temple of literary fame, in the shape of editions and readers at least. Being a historic king, of whom the historians, poets, and autobiographers have written so voluminously, it is essential to know, in the first place, what he wrote

[1] Mémoires Historiques et Instructions de Louis XIV. pour le Dauphin, son fils, Œuvres, i. and ii.

of himself. We can only fairly judge the king and his system, and his eulogists and critics as well, with the "Mémoires Historiques" in our hands. They have all the interest of a confession, and this confession, coming from a man who was for fifty years the object of a species of hero-worship without parallel, possesses the rarest interest. Unfortunately, it covers only the first six years of a long reign, and refers only to the all too short period of Louis' beneficent activity as reformer and legislator. In it the monarch appears in his best mood. He is engaged heart and soul in the high task of reform and reorganisation, and has not entered on the fatal path of ambition and conquest in the pursuit of an egotistic glory. We must, no doubt, make allowance for a certain amount of vivid colouring, for the characteristic predilection to stand well in the sight of the world, for the self-exaltation of a king who had a high opinion of himself, and laid much stress on the good opinion of others. He is none the less to be judged by his own words as far as his actions do not contradict them. The "Mémoires" shall, therefore, be allowed, in the first place, to speak for themselves.

Louis is very explicit in the assertion of the unlimited exercise of his royal power. That power is limited by God alone. "God alone is the judge of the government of kings."[1] Unquestioning subjection to the monarch is the only guarantee of the tranquillity of the State. To admit the right of revolution is to pervert the order of things. The right to deliberate and resolve belongs to the head alone; the whole function of the other members consists in execution. Louis cannot conceive the admissibility or the serviceableness of parliamentary government, even in resistance to a bad prince. If a prime minister is inadmissible, much more a popular assembly, like the English Parliament. The prime minister is a person of your own choice, even if he becomes the participator of your power. A popular assembly is your rival. The more you concede to it, the higher rise its pretensions; the more you caress it, the greater its contempt. The pretence of regulating your projects according to its fancy will cause the prince more trouble than all the cares of his crown. Every prince that loves the tranquillity of his subjects and respects his own dignity will take the utmost care to repress this source of tumultuous audacity.[2] With humble apologies to the royal author, this dictum must be pronounced arrogant nonsense, and it is to be hoped that our royal author would have acquiesced in this conclusion had he lived in the twentieth instead of the seventeenth century. The office of sovereign, he continues, can only be filled

[1] Méms. Hist., i. 56. [2] *Ibid.*, ii. 26-29.

by the sovereign himself. The monarch has no fortune to advance but that of the State, no acquisition to make except for the increase of the monarchy, no authority to maintain except that of the laws, no debts to pay except the public charges, no friends to enrich except his subjects. A beautiful theory, doubtless, but a dangerous one in the hands of a strong-willed sovereign who may be incapable of discriminating between his own desires and conceptions and the real interest of the State. Louis, in fact, embodies the State, and with the most naive simplicity passes off his individual will for the general will which the State can alone embody. He is even lord of all property, and may dispose of it as he pleases. "Kings are absolute lords, and possess by nature the full and free disposition of all property, clerical as well as secular, for the general benefit of the State."[1] On this maxim he founds the duty of the clergy to contribute to the needs of the State. The same maxim might yield a pretext for universal confiscation, and the self-consciousness of Louis XIV. is apparently not appalled at the enormity of the assumption.

While promulgating doctrines which involve the usurpation of all rights, personal as well as political, he is careful to impose on himself the moral restraints of a high ideal of duty. If he arrogates unlimited power, he will exercise it wisely and justly. "As the principal hope of reformation lay in my own will," he remarks in reference to the abuses rampant at the beginning of his reign, "its first foundation consisted in rendering my will completely absolute, and this by a course of action which imposed submission and respect, rendering exact justice to whom justice was due, and conferring favours when and on whom I pleased. The course of my actions should be such, however, that if I rendered a reason for my conduct to no one, it should appear that I was none the less guided by reason, and that, in my view, the reward of services, the elevation of merit—in a word, the doing of good—ought not only to be the grand occupation, but the greatest pleasure of the prince."[2] If he insists on the duty of the people to the sovereign, he lays stress on the duty of the sovereign to the people. "I have always considered as the greatest pleasure in life the satisfaction one experiences in doing one's duty."[3] Nay, the prince ought to consider the good of his subjects much more than his own. He is the head of a body of which they are the members, and his power ought to manifest its efficacy in their happiness. He will, therefore, throw open his cabinet to every one who has a grievance to complain of, or a favour

[1] Méms. Hist., ii. 121. [2] *Ibid.*, i. 18. [3] *Ibid.*, i. 105.

to petition, and will strive to keep himself in touch with the feelings and wants of the people, and thus safeguard against oppression and gain their affections. The first aim of the administration of the finances ought to be to lighten their burdens. A Fouquet, he wrathfully exclaims, is an enemy of the State, a scoundrel who shall atone for his misdeeds. Fouquet shall make place for Colbert, and men of merit and ability shall maintain a serviceable administration in every department. Louis himself set the example of devotion by his intense application, and the determination to supervise and, if possible, master every detail of government. He resembled Napoleon in his scrupulous attention to detail, though he cannot be credited, in spite of his extraordinary self-esteem, with Napoleon's creative genius. The king should not consider attention to detail beneath his dignity. "The greatest affairs depend almost always on the smallest." He ought, therefore, to acquaint himself with everything, and give his ministers nothing to do of which he is not the chief participator. Power without application is untenable. To wish power without labour is to be guilty of ingratitude towards God and tyranny towards men. Nothing is more laborious than laziness. He imposed upon himself, as a law, to work regularly for several hours twice a day, without counting the time devoted to private or extraordinary affairs. His mother laughed sceptically at the feverish activity of his *début*. Ministers and courtiers saw in it only a passing fit. Both were undeceived by the perseverance that toiled with unrelaxed energy for fifty years. Mazarin had not divined erroneously. "He will get on the road a little late," he prophesied, "but he will go farther than any other." The difficulties and the vastness of his task were not allowed to discourage him. "Difficulties form great men." The impossibility of doing all shall not prevent him doing what he can. "I cannot," he reflects, "express the results I reaped from this resolution. It braced both mind and heart. I felt a different man. I discovered in myself what I had hitherto ignored, and I reproached myself with joy for having so long remained in this ignorance."[1] "Here I am," he continues, looking back over this first fruitful decade, "marching with a fair share of constancy in the same path, relaxing nothing of my application, informed of everything, giving audience to the least of my subjects, knowing at any moment the number and the quality of my troops and the condition of my fortresses, incessantly giving orders for the supply of their wants, treating directly with the ministers of foreign powers, receiving and reading despatches, writing myself part of the answers and giving

[1] Mém. Hist., i. 19-21.

to my secretaries the substance of the rest, regulating the revenue and the expenditure of my kingdom, exacting an account of their stewardship from those placed in important posts, preserving a greater secrecy in my affairs than any of my predecessors, distributing favours of my own choice, retaining those who serve me, though loaded with benefits, in a spirit of modesty, far removed from the elevation and power of prime ministers."[1]

The principal function of a king consists in allowing good sense to act. Another of equal importance is to discover and utilise the best talents for special offices, and Louis took credit to himself for a masterly proficiency in this art. He was certainly served in the first half of his active reign by men of consummate ability, by Colbert, Lionne, Le Tellier, Louvois. "The first half of his reign," says St Simon, "was fruitful of distinguished men of every kind. His ministers of the interior and of foreign affairs were the most able men in Europe, his generals the greatest, their seconds the best. The political movement by which the State had been so furiously agitated, both from within and without, since the death of Louis XIII., had produced a large number of men who composed a court of skilful and illustrious persons and of refined courtiers."[2] The great ministers of this period had, however, been formed by Mazarin, and Louis was not happy in his choice of their successors. He was apt to mistake mediocrity for genius in his desire to flatter himself into the belief in the infallibility of his insight and the sufficiency of his own efficiency. The fact that Louis XIV. had appointed a man to a great office was an irrefragable guarantee of his fitness, and in making such appointments he was too often the unwitting victim of flattery or of vanity. If a candidate for office knew how to turn a skilful phrase in adulation of the incomparable monarch, more especially to ascribe everything to the unfathomable wisdom of the supreme director of affairs, his rise to high administrative rank was secure. Whether the administration was always the gainer is another matter. Though Louis loved to pose as the master mind in all respects, and flattered himself with the idea that he concentrated the whole activity of the State in himself, he realised that the most assiduous of monarchs cannot dispense with co-operation. Absolutism, he confesses, may direct, it cannot adequately execute. The prince shall take counsel, though he shall decide himself. Louis accordingly instituted a number of councils for the more efficient discharge of the work of administration. There was the King's Privy

[1] Méms. Hist., i. 37, 38.

[2] Mémoires de St Simon (Chéruel and Regnier), xii. 3.

Council, called the Conseil d'en Haut, which in 1661 consisted of but three members, Le Tellier, Lionne, Fouquet, who presently gave place to Colbert. There was the Council of Despatches (the Conseil de Dépêches), which met once a fortnight, was composed of the secretaries of State, and concerned itself with the details of administration. Though its members were not allowed independence, they possessed great power in subservience to that of the king. There was lastly the Council of State (Conseil d'État), with its three branches —the Council of State proper, which dealt with questions of politics and religion; the Council of Direction (Conseil de Direction), which occupied itself with finance; and the Conseil des Parties, to which appeals were referred, and other matters reserved for the cognition of the Council of State.[1] These councils exist, however, merely on sufferance. Their members are agents, not representatives, for as we have seen, and shall further see, anything in the nature of a representative body was an offence to Louis XIV. The Parliaments, as courts of justice, he allowed to subsist, but he would have been the last man to think of convening the States-General. Even in the lowest extremity of humiliation and calamity towards the close of his reign, he could not bring himself to consult the nation in its representative capacity. His idea of the king is ever that of a master, superintending his workmen and working himself. He is the exclusive master of the State, and to be able to act on his own initiative is the great point; to be master always and in every department the supremely important thing. "Those who participate in your work must to a certain extent participate in your power. Assign to others, therefore, that only which it is impossible for yourself to retain."[2] This jealous, essentially egotistic temperament was not in the long run to prove to the advantage of the nation. However commendable Louis' lofty zeal, he was too vain and arrogant to assume his own infallibility with impunity. He had not in himself all the resources of the truly great ruler. He had no genius of any kind but that of command, and the genius of command, coupled with egregious self-assurance and exaltation, is a dangerous quality in a king. Moreover, his assumption of the *rôle* of the all-sufficient providence is an impossible *rôle* even to the born ruler. Absolute government in the sense of government literally by one man is a misnomer. No mortal was, is, or can be absolute in any

[1] See Chéruel, De l'Administration de Louis XIV., d'après les Mémoires Inédits d'Olivier D'Ormesson, 52-60. These memoirs have since been published in the series of Documents Inédits; cf. Journal de Dangeau (Paris, 1817), i. 30.

[2] Méms. Hist., i. 150.

real sense, and no mortal was ever begotten that could be sufficien in himself for the government of ten, or twenty, or thirty millions o people. Historians write glibly of what this or that absolute kin did, and coolly set down the events of a reign to his credit or dis credit. Thus, what a Louis XIV. did amounts, in the pages of th historians and the autobiographers, to the fabulous. It was thu that Louis XIV. loved, and, what is more, paid, the historians t write. It is nevertheless safe to believe that Louis XIV. neve performed the thousandth part of what, in the usual phraseology, h is assumed to have done, or what he, in his self-glory, took credit t himself for doing. There were many individuals responsible for th collective activity of the reign of even the most laborious of potentates Absolutism is a system of government, rather than an actual govern ment. The theory of one man government is in reality a fiction It never existed, and never can exist, though, unfortunately for Louis an egregious egotism, which often led him wrong, warrants us i ascribing to his personal account the evils as well as the virtues o the system.

The management of the nobility was an important and delicate part of royal policy. The aim of Louis was to knit the nobility in attachment to his person and service, and not to suffer aristocratic cabal and division. The maxim of Mazarin had been, Divide in order to rule. That of Louis was, Unite in order to reign. The former he regards as worthy only of a weak prince. To suffer strife is to cultivate faction, and faction is incompatible with the entire subordination to an absolute sovereign.[1] The nobles shall become courtiers and courtiers only. They shall live at court, whose luxury and magnificence shall attract them, and at the same time impose the people.[2] They shall be the satellites of the royal majesty, and place their swords at the service of the royal ambition. Privilege they shal retain, and pensions, festivity, dissipation, even, they shall have power, none. The members of the administrative hierarchy shall b chosen from the middle class or the lesser nobility. Aristocracy i for show rather than for use, like the magnificent artistic furniture o the royal palaces. Its chief function is to contribute to the grandeu of the monarch, not to its own. Independence and true dignity ar hard to maintain in this privileged, but dependent sphere assigned t the men of rank. For duke and marquis magnificent domestic title are multiplied, and these high-sounding official titles thinly disguise the fact that they are but the superior valets of majesty. There is n

[1] Méms. Hist., ii. 189-192.

[2] *Ibid.*, i. 192, 193; cf. the Mémoires de St Simon, xii. c. 4.

trace in the functions of these pompous dignitaries of the influence and legislative power of the English aristocracy. Socially they count for much, politically nothing. "It was not in my interest to choose my ministers from among men of eminent quality. It was necessary above all to make known to the public by the quality of those whom I placed in office, that it was not my intention to share my authority with them. It was of the utmost importance that they should not conceive higher hopes than those which it pleased me to permit. This is always difficult in the case of people of high birth."[1]

An admirable feature of Louis' *régime* during the first decade of his personal rule is the stress laid on good government, the intense devotion to the best interests of the nation. The people shall bless him as their benefactor, and ascribe their felicity to his providence. "If God give me grace to execute all that I purpose for the benefit of the people, I shall strive to increase the felicity of my reign to such a degree that there shall no longer exist, I shall not say rich or poor, for the distinction is unavoidable among men so different by reason of fortune, industry, and intelligence, but mendicity or indigence in the kingdom, and that all, however low in the social scale, may be assured of subsistence either by their own labour, or by succours, wisely applied."[2] This language is worthy of an enlightened legislator. Louis may justly at this period claim the merit of conceiving and of striving to realise a high ideal of statesmanship. If he does not possess all the qualities of a great ruler, he cherishes the intentions, and seeks to earn the reputation of such. Mazarin did not exaggerate in a sense when he said, "He has in him the stuff to make four kings, and is besides an honest man." He hated the very name of sham kings and royal sluggards (*rois fainéants*) and mayors of the palace.[3] He was not profound, but he possessed the sense of the great, and his desire to effect it was not the whim of an effervescent youth of twenty-two, as Fouquet, who speculated on being prime minister in six months, believed. He will be the veritable father of the people at twenty-two, and laboriousness, combined with good sense, tact, sincerity, and the love of justice, bade fair to earn him the title. For nearly twenty years the promise of a popular ruler in the best sense of the term was not blighted. During this period the influence of Colbert kept him, with highly beneficial

[1] Méms. Hist., i. 36.

[2] *Ibid.*, i. 153, 154. Cf. Relation de la Conduite Présente de la Cour de France, by a gentleman of the suite of Cardinal Chigi, 1665, Archives Curieuses, second series, x. 1-76.

[3] *Ibid.*, i. 6.

results, true to his ideal, and it is to Colbert that its active measures are chiefly due. In the "Memoirs" it is Louis that is the author of all reforms; in the "Correspondance Administrative" it is Colbert who is the soul of the administration. Louis worked hard, but Colbert worked still harder. He was not only a paragon of industry; he had the advantage of the master in having gained large experience of affairs under Mazarin. Louis was allowed little chance of asserting his powers by the great carndial. Mazarin did not wholly neglect his education, as has been frequently alleged.[1] The "Memoirs" reveal a vigorous, well-balanced, though not a widely informed, mind, which reasons on men and events, on human nature, particularly that species of human nature to be found about a court, on government, on art, on literature, and even on theology, with considerable discrimination. He had some Latin, and has left a translation of Cæsar's Commentaries, in which he had at least a hand. His preceptor, the Abbé de Beaumont, gave him as much lore as the heir to a throne can ordinarily be expected to take in. He was certainly not what we understand by a man of culture, but the formation of his judgment was evidently not utterly neglected, if he cannot be credited with large intellectual power or wide intellectual sympathy, and the failure of the good abbé to form his morals was the consequence of the warm temperament which Louis inherited from his grandfather, and of the laxity of a libertine society. Mazarin did not, latterly at least, neglect his administrative training, and while subordinating the exercise of his powers to his own supremacy, initiated him into the science and the routine of government. Louis was an apt pupil, and besides presiding over the royal council, occupied his mind independently in earnest meditation on his future *rôle*.[2] To Mazarin he was indebted for much advice, part of it sound advice. But neither by nature nor experience was he a Colbert, and it is chiefly to Colbert that the best part of his reign is due.

The son of a merchant of Reims, where he was born in 1619, Colbert[3] began life, according to tradition, as an apprentice clerk at Paris and Lyons. Every great man must have a pedigree, and Colbert pretended to be descended from a noble Scottish family, a branch of which settled in France in the fourteenth century. To claim a noble Scottish origin seems to have been a favourite device

[1] See, for instance, Mémoires de St Simon, xii. 13.

[2] Méms. Hist., i. 6-8.

[3] For the life and work of Colbert see Histoire de Colbert et de son Administration; par Pierre Clément, two tomes, second edition, with preface by M. Geffroy.

of a number of distinguished Frenchmen, whose best title to distinction was their own merit. Abandoning a mercantile career, he hesitated some time between the profession of the law and the civil service, and finally appears as a humble drudge in the office of a petty State functionary, bearing the exalted title of a *Trésorier des Parties Casuelles*. The patronage of Le Tellier, the secretary for war, in whose department he was subsequently employed as commissary, brought him the favour of Mazarin. At the age of thirty he was already Councillor of State and the husband of a rich wife. The elevation of the ambitious young man was nevertheless the work of merit as well as of fortune, the reward of ability as well as ambition. His mental grasp, slow but invincible, his prodigious industry and strength of will, made their weight felt. Mazarin recognised the born administrator, and Colbert, while cherishing and sometimes expressing aversion for the financial maladministration of the cardinal and his creatures, recognised the services of the minister, and even profited from the abuses which he was powerless to remedy. He had a keen eye for his own advantage, and took good care to get an ample share of offices and emoluments. He died, in fact, one of the wealthiest men in France. His compliance towards his rapacious patron, whose private affairs he managed with consummate skill, did not include approval of the unprincipled Fouquet. Colbert became the sworn,[1] though not ostensible enemy of the incorrigible superintendent—partly indeed from motives of jealousy and rivalry—and plied the cardinal with arguments in favour of financial reform and the punishment of the superintendent and his creatures. "The finances," said he in one of these epistles, "stand in need of a chamber of justice, severe and rigorous." Mazarin, himself too deeply implicated to risk exposure, hesitated to strike, but his strong testamentary recommendation of Colbert to Louis was a guarantee that the blow which subsequently fell with such terrible swiftness on the unsuspecting Fouquet, was only suspended. Of the crowd of peculators who expected to make themselves indispensable under the new *régime*, Fouquet was the chief. His fall was the sensational act with which Louis and Colbert inaugurated their union in the work of reform. Louis suppressed the office of superintendent and assumed the direction of the finances himself, with the assistance of a council of four members, of whom Colbert, with the title of intendant, was the principal (15th September 1661).[2] Though practically the mentor of the monarch in all branches of ad-

[1] See Lettres de Mad. de Sevigné, i. 67.

[2] Isambert, xviii. 9-12, Conseil Royal de Finance.

ministration, it was not till 1665 that he was made Controller General,[1] and not till 1669 that he obtained the formal title of Secretary of State, with the charge of the marine, the colonies and commerce, the royal household and affairs of clergy, in addition to the direction of the finances.

Colbert has been the object of unstinted eulogy and unstinted detraction. When he died in 1683 he was perhaps the best hated man in France, and his remains had to be guarded from the menace of mob violence. Like Sully, his manner was brusque and taciturn, and an audience with him was regarded as an ordeal for which those who had a pension or other favour to ask had to brace themselves with more than ordinary self-possession.[2] He had no patience with loquacity, and his Cerberus-like manner in office made him many enemies. In later times he has had many panegyrists. Both the hatred and the admiration were exaggerated. He was not the hard taskmaster, the inflexible and heartless promulgator of fiscal edicts whom the people execrated; he was not the man of genius in office whom many historians have vaunted as the model of administrators. He was a talented finance minister, an incorruptible reformer, one of the most industrious officials on record, honest, faithful, loyal, devoted. But he created nothing except order, for he was method incarnate, and brought his strength to bear, for a time with success, on the financial chaos in which Fouquet had landed the fiscal administration. His economic policy, which was not original, was faulty, and ultimately proved ruinous, and he intensified the trend towards centralisation and ubiquitous State interference, which was fatal to local liberty, individual initiative, and national prosperity.

In order to judge his merits and demerits let us pass in brief review his work as reformer and administrator. He was as fertile in expedients for the restoration of financial order as Fouquet had been in devices for impoverishing the State and ruining the people. Anticipations, augmentation of the *taille*, loans at ruinous interest, alienation of the revenue to speculators for a supply of ready money, creation and sale of offices, were the chief features of Fouquet's method of enriching himself and his fellow-peculators. Colbert's policy was one of vigorous reaction and retrenchment. The claims of the State creditors should be subjected to a strict scrutiny, the number of offices reduced, the charges on the revenue proportionally diminished, taxation cease to become oppressive, expenditure be kept within the limit of income, and the deficit accruing from the

[1] It was by this title that the finance minister was designated till 1789.

[2] See Lettres de Mad. de Sevigné, iii. 224; cf. iv. 217.

relief of the peasantry made good by the suppression of a large number of privileges, as well as by the increase of indirect taxes affecting the rich classes. The revenue should thus not be derived from the oppression of the people, but be the influx of a wisely ordered system justly applied. The increase of wealth by the development of agriculture, industry, and commerce should both lighten the burden for the nation and increase its utility to the State. The surest means of increasing the revenue, he insists, is to make the people prosperous, and prosperity is incompatible with oppression. Extraordinary expedients—loans, anticipations, alienations, etc.,—are so many violent remedies which merely weaken the body of the State. If the body is to be kept healthy, the treatment must be natural.

Such being his financial principles, let us see how he applied them. First, there was a wholesale slaughter of the tribe of revenue officials who had paid Fouquet for the honour of an official title and made the people pay for their greed and their vanity. Many of these offices being lucrative sinecures, large sums were offered to preserve them to their owners, but Colbert's arguments showing the hardship to the people and the injury to the State, accruing from a multitude of useless functionaries, were irrefragable, and Louis refused to be bribed. The appalling obligations of the State in the form of debts, anticipations, etc.—amounting to four hundred and fifty-one millions and inherited from twenty-five years of war, and double that period of financial mismanagement,—were, in accordance with the precedent established by Sully, relegated for examination to a chamber of justice, appointed in December 1661.[1] A considerable portion of this sum represented the enormous fortunes amassed by Fouquet and his crew of speculators out of the miseries of the people and the necessities of the State. It was this commission that examined and judged Fouquet, whom Louis kept in play with abominable, if masterly dissimulation up to the 5th September, the day of his arrest at Nantes, and who narrowly escaped the block and expiated his crimes by a life-long imprisonment in the fortress of Pignerol,[2] in spite of the advocacy of powerful friends. The prosecution of Fouquet did not reveal a scrupulous regard for fair play or legal forms in his prosecutors, but then Colbert was fighting a bad system with wide and powerful ramifications, and reform, to be effective, must strike hard and harshly. The consternation of his associates was in the ratio of the joy of the nation and the popularity of the monarch, who, in the edict appointing the commission, gave expres-

[1] Isambert, xviii. 13-15. [2] *Ibid.*, xviii. 43.

sion to his detestation of the crimes from which the people had so long suffered. The relentless retribution which struck at the chief delinquent did not spare the lesser. Some were condemned to death, others to the Bastille or the galleys, others to make restitution of a large part of their ill-gotten gains. A total of one hundred and ten millions[1] was rescued from the plunder which had gone to build splendid mansions, maintain expensive mistresses, feed the gambling board, at the price of so much misery to the people. Another expedient, hazardous, but equally pat to the purpose of diminishing the burdens of the State, was the determination to pay off its creditors at a reduced rate both of capital and interest.[2] An arbitrary measure doubtless, but when it is remembered that in 1661 three-fifths of the annual revenue were consumed by the public creditor, and only two-fifths remained to the treasury,[3] and that many of the claims were fraudulent, the necessity for drastic methods is patent. Moreover, these stocks had been purchased at a low price, and the minister might feel himself justified in making a reduction for the benefit of the State. The reduction, it might be said, being equivalent to partial bankruptcy, could not be in the true interests of the State, since it tended to damage its credit, and make future loans impossible, but Colbert's aim was to dispense with loans altogether, and to make the revenue equal to all the demands of administration. Unfortunately he was unable in the sequel to abide by his resolution, and was compelled to borrow to meet the increasing war charges. From 1671 to 1683 he reluctantly raised loans to the amount of 262,000,000 francs, at an annual cost of 13,900,000. The soundness of the State credit was, however, unimpaired by the operation, and the substantial character of this credit is the justification and the merit of his financial administration. He fought hard to persuade the king to eschew an expedient which could only tend to raise the taxes. "You have triumphed," said he to Lamoignan, who advocated this course, "and you think you have acted like a good patriot. I know as well as you that the king can easily borrow money, but I should take good care not to tell him this. You have opened the road to loans, and what means will henceforth remain of restricting the king in his expenses? After the loans there will come additional taxes to pay them, and the taxes as well as the loans will have no limit."[4]

[1] Chéruel, Administration de Louis XIV., 75.

[2] See, for instance, the ordinance of 24th May 1664.

[3] Though the revenue was 84,000,000 livres, the king only received 32,000,000.

[4] Chéruel, Administration, 88, 89.

The reduction of these claims raised a hornets' nest about the minister's ears. The *rentiers* of the capital threatened a revolt, and their rebellious spirit was only cowed by the threat of the Bastille. "Consternation and despair took possession of everybody," notes Oliver D'Ormesson, "and ill consequences are to be feared, for many people who have no other source of income are threatened with ruin."[1] Colbert was a great believer in arbitrary power beneficially wielded. His maxim was, that in matters affecting the welfare of the State, the king must always be in the right, and the people must sacrifice their interests and their wills to his. So long as the royal will was in the keeping of a Colbert, the maxim might be beneficial. The maxim would assume a very different aspect if the will of the king should come to be synonymous with his ambition and his extravagance.

The charge of arbitrariness and bad faith could not be made against the attempt to recover the portion of the royal domain, alienated at a low rate, in return for compensation in cases of a legal title. A further reduction of petty administrative offices, which not only gratified a ridiculous vanity, but exempted their holders from taxation, added to the number while reducing the individual liability of the taxpayers. The excess of this abuse[2] may be gauged from the fact that even after this industrious elimination of royal secretaries, notaries, procurators, bailiffs, and other innumerable species of the genus of royal functionaries, the members of the official hierarchy still numbered 45,780. Unfortunately the minister's pruning hook was stayed in presence of two abuses which tainted the administration of justice. Colbert was unable to abolish the heredity and the venality of Parliamentary offices. The members of the Parliaments continued to buy the right to dispense justice and to hand down their offices to their posterity, but the price of these charges was, at least, lessened, and the magistracy placed within the reach of merit as well as fortune.[3] The liquidation of the debt which encumbered most of the municipalities and communes of the kingdom was another laudable achievement of Colbert's reforming zeal. The edict of 1667 reinstated the inhabitants of all communes and parishes in their rights in the public lands alienated for the profit of a corrupt magistracy, or of rich speculators, on condition of paying within ten

[1] Chéruel, 83; cf. Correspondance Administrative sous le Règne de Louis XIV., edited for the Documents Inédits by G. B. Depping, iii. 67.

[2] See Isambert, xviii. 37.

[3] Isambert, xviii. 66-69; cf. *ibid.*, 325, where the object of the reformer is "de faciliter l'entrée des charges aux personnes qui le merite y appelleroit."

years the price of those legally sold. Such loans and alienations were henceforth made illegal, except in special cases, and only with the general assent of the inhabitants and the sanction of the king. The welfare of the people was evidently in watchful keeping when the poor was so alertly protected from the oppression of the rich.

Colbert even ventured to reduce taxation in the face of heavy arrears, a large deficit, and an enormous debt. He grasped the fact that the treasury could never be full as long as the people were poor. If under a vicious fiscal system the peasantry was compelled to eat the bark of trees, as in Languedoc, and a large portion of the soil had gone out of cultivation, the revenue must shrink. The peasantry might be imprisoned or harried out of house and holding in order to extort arrears, but the State must suffer in proportion to the suffering of the peasant. The wretchedness of the peasantry was only too evident. "The people," said Lamoignan, a member of the chamber of justice, "groans in every province under the hand of the oppressor, and it seems as if their substance and even their blood can alone sate the thirst of these vampires. The misery of these poor creatures has already reached the last extremity." It is the interest of government to care for the welfare of the people, and on this principle Colbert remitted all arrears of the *taille* anterior to 1656, reduced by several millions the annual assessment, abolished all the augmentations of the *aides* since 1645, and diminished the salt tax. Like Sully, he hesitated to lay the axe at the radical vice of taxation—he did not venture to make it equable. He allowed the exemption of the nobility and the clergy from the *taille* to subsist. To pay *taille* was not merely an irksome burden, it was a mark of the inferiority of the commoner. His measures for the better regulation of taxation were thus only tentative, and were unfortunately destined to have but a transient effect. France had to wait till the Revolution for a measure which justice and policy alike demanded. He deserves at least the credit of seeking to modify the abuses of a bad system, to restrain the injustice of arbitrary assessment, which took no account of the difference in wealth or property of the taxpayer. Like Sully, too, he made war on exemption whenever he could do so without incurring insuperable obstacles in the prejudices of the age. He revoked all patents of nobility accorded or sold since 1634,[1] except those conferred for special services to the State. He pursued with the utmost severity those would-be privileged aristocrats. He deprived a host of petty municipal and communal functionaries of the privilege of immunity from taxation.

[1] Isambert, xviii. 40, 41.

He increased the vigilance of the intendant over the receivers-general, though he had not the courage or the insight to uproot the bad system of farming the taxes. The beneficial results of this policy of financial reform are apparent from the revenue returns from 1661 to 1671—a decade which may be compared with that from 1600 to 1610. The net revenue in 1661 was thirty-two millions livres; it was seventy-seven millions in 1671, in spite of the reduction of the *taille*, the *gabelle*, and the *aides*.[1]

Nevertheless Colbert's financial reforms did not produce the millennium. There was misery enough at times in some of the provinces, and bitter protest against taxation. "Much misery among the people, and very great scarcity of money," we find him writing to Louis in 1673. This misery occasionally incited to revolt. The inhabitants of Gascony rose in arms in 1664-65 under the redoubtable Audijos, who continued to defy the royal troops for several years.[2] A tax on wine drove the inhabitants of Berry to adopt the same desperate remedy in 1664, under the plea of destitution. The growing surplus was not always the sign of plenty. "There is far greater misery here than in the other provinces," wrote the intendant (18th June 1664). . . . "The common people is reduced to beggary." In 1668 Roussillon protested against the *gabelle* arms in hand, and here too the hangman and the dragoons were called in to enforce the edicts of the minister. Two years later, in consequence of the severe winter of 1670 and the oppressions of the fiscal officials, the Vivarais was seething with rebellion, which developed into a regular Jacquerie until the government had amassed sufficient troops to take a terrible vengeance. The wheel, the gibbet, the galleys received a large number of victims. After the drain of war had begun to make itself felt in extra taxation, the popular restiveness became more general and threatening. In 1675 the inhabitants of Bordeaux refused to pay these new taxes, and massacred several of the obnoxious officials who fell in their way. "Long live the king minus the *gabelle*," was the rallying cry of the mob, who compelled the intendant to promise the abolition of all additional impositions. From Bordeaux the insurrection spread all over Guienne, and here, as in the Vivarais, the government, after temporising long enough to gather its strength,

[1] For the financial administration of Colbert see Correspondance Administrative (Depping), Documents Inédits, iii.; Lettres, Instructions, et Mémoires de Colbert, edited by Pierre Clément, ii.; Histoire de Colbert, par P. Clément, i., which is based on the foregoing; Mémoires Historiques de Louis XIV., i. 101-115, 146-155, 209; Chéruel, Administration de Louis XIV., 71-91; Voltaire, Siècle de Louis XIV., chap. 30; Martin, Histoire de France, xiii. 15-66.

[2] See Correspondance Administrative, ii. 148 *et seq.*

retaliated with terrible severity. Such barbarities are a blot upon Colbert's record as a financial reformer, and an ugly illustration of his doctrine of the efficacy of force in government. Rennes followed the example of Bordeaux, and the insurrectionary fever spread from the provincial capital throughout Brittany, as throughout Guienne. It was not till the Duke of Chaulnes had perambulated Lower Brittany with a force of 6,000 men that resistance and outrage ceased. The rigour of his repressive measures,[1] which kept the hangman busy for several months at Rennes and elsewhere, as well as the terrible excesses of the soldiery, intimidated the wretched people. They certainly did not tend to make the name of the monarch or his minister loved in the homes of the poor, and such excesses are a strange commentary on the philanthropic sentiments of the royal "Memoirs."[2]

Production is the true test of prosperity, and in Colbert's opinion production was only compatible with protection. Hence the adoption of a prohibitive economic policy in order to compel France to build its own ships to carry its trade, establish factories to supply its own manufactured goods, create a market for its agricultural produce in a vastly increased industrial population, construct canals and improve its highways for the quicker transit of goods, develop a vast commerce with Africa, America, Asia, and compete with the Dutch and English in the markets of Europe. Colbert persuaded himself that protection would alone secure these ends. The nation should be compelled to take up the work of Henry IV. and Sully after an interval of foreign wars and domestic strife, which had largely nullified that work, by a series of negative edicts supplemented by a series of positive measures. With the one hand the minister set up a rampart against foreign competition by imposing heavy duties on foreign manufactures while allowing the free importation of raw material, with the other he sought to develop the national resources. His economic policy, while open to criticism, as we shall see, produced results that were apparently very satisfactory for the time being. "France," says Voltaire, who only scans the surface, "had never been so prosperous as during the period between the death of Mazarin and the commencement of the war in 1689."[3] It would certainly be difficult to find a decade during which, all things considered, the energy of one man was directed with such persistence to the task of developing

[1] See Lettres de Mad. de Sevigné, ii. 340, 387, 502.

[2] For these events see Histoire de Colbert, i. chap. 11. Tom. iii. of the Correspondance Administrative contains abundant evidence of the misery and the rebellious mood of the people on the score of taxation and oppressive duties.

[3] Siècle de Louis XIV., 403.

the industrial and commercial activity of a nation. During that decade Colbert toiled like a Titan at the task of economic legislation. The tariff of 1664,[1] which proposed to abolish provincial customs and simplified export and import duties, still followed a moderate policy, and was highly beneficial in its effects, but that of 1667 was emphatically protective. It prohibited the importation of a variety of foreign manufactured goods, and raised the duty on others. It practically, in fact, shut the manufactures of England and Holland out of the French market. The revival of languishing industries, as well as the production of new ones, which this measure rendered imperative, he further encouraged by premiums, privileges, and monopolies. To form the taste of French workmen, he brought skilled artisans from Italy, Flanders, Holland, and Germany,[2] and energetically repressed the attempt to evade the increased duties by a contraband trade.[3] He discouraged idleness by the suppression of a number of ecclesiastical holidays,[4] and checked, in the interest of industry, the excessive profession of the monastic life. Factories sprang up all over the country, and the tapestry, laces, fine linen, silks, leather, glass, and other products of French industry excelled those of foreign countries.[5] The State not only encouraged, it controlled industry, regulating, for instance, the conditions of admission into the trade guilds, and thus perpetuating the restrictions on free labour,[6] regulating, too, the quality, size, weight of goods in the minutest manner, and thus discouraging freedom of initiative, and depriving the manufacturer of the right to reckon with the factor of diversity of taste and demand.

In this policy Colbert followed tradition too closely. He only modified, in some respects tried to improve, existing institutions. He was no reformer in the revolutionary sense, no champion of an original policy against monopoly and restriction. For this boon France had to wait for a greater man than Colbert. He contributed nothing to the emancipation of labour from mediæval shackles. He took and left things much as he found them, while striving to make the best of them according to his light. It would have been a task beyond his powers to take to pieces the fabric of mediæval institutions, and inaugurate an economic revolution. He was only fitted to patch up an old system. This was what he attempted, and attempted with great persistence and some temporary success. Permanent success was impossible, because the system was bad. His principle was the

[1] Isambert, xviii. 41.
[2] See Corresp. Admin., iii. 693 and 696, etc.
[3] Mém. Hist., ii. 235-238.
[4] *Ibid.*, ii. 239.
[5] See Isambert, xviii. 139, 191, 60, 63, etc.
[6] Isambert, xix. 91, 92.

erroneous one that the wealth of a country consists in money. Money must, therefore, be retained as far as possible if the country is to be made and kept prosperous. To this end the French must manufacture their own goods, and not enrich foreign manufacturers and merchants at their own expense. The State must aid by granting monopolies, etc., and imposing protective duties. This policy was by no means original to Colbert, who was not a more enlightened economist than most of his predecessors. To pay monopolies was to increase taxation, and rob the people to enrich the manufacturer. To impose heavy protective duties against foreign manufactured articles was to enhance the price of French products, and again rob the people. Artificial stimulation may be good for the expiring victim, and this is all that can be said in favour of Colbert's policy; it is not good for the healthy man, and it did not tend ultimately to benefit France. His services to French industry have been exaggerated. True, he was handicapped by the royal extravagance and by the disturbing influence of a long war, but before he died the effect of artificial stimulation in begetting a temporary activity had spent itself. If France had grown to such an extent in wealth as his admirers assume, the difficulty of raising additional taxes would not have been so great as he found it towards the close of his administration. Trade was languishing, wages were low, and industry was declining. All Colbert's thrift, ability, honesty, and perseverance could not make good the drawbacks of an erroneous policy. The royal wastefulness only made the task more difficult, but the chief difficulty lay in the system. Protection, interference, monopoly formed poor substitutes for self-help and natural exchange. Foreigners learned to do without French wares, or learned to make them for themselves. The retaliatory duties on French wines imported into England led to the substitution of the wines of Portugal and the Canaries for those of France. A tariff war in a similar spirit of reprisals was the retort of the Dutch, whose carrying trade was seriously menaced by the diminution of their export commerce with France, and who retaliated by raising the duties on French imports. From recriminative and retributive edicts the disputants came to blows in 1672, and it was only after six years of war, as we shall see, that the Dutch were able to dictate the modification of the obnoxious tariff as far as Holland was concerned. No wonder that before the end of the century, the general cry was for freer trade by reduction of import and export duties. "We must abandon the maxim of M. Colbert," was the general conclusion, "who claimed that France could do without the rest of the world." Equally loud was the

protest against excessive State interference with industry. Under the old *régime* it was not State interference, but liberty that was needed, for liberty could not flourish under a king who was its measure, and a minister who imagined that his own activity could be a substitute for it.

To Colbert the development of French industry was the guarantee of the development of French commerce. He sought to open markets for industrial products, not merely in the Levant and the Baltic, but in the colonies, and in the bazaars of the far East.[1] He reorganised the Council of Commerce established by Sully, and became its leading spirit.[2] He encouraged shipbuilding in order that the mercantile marine of France might oust the English and the Dutch from the carrying trade of France and the world. He gave his active patronage to the construction of the canal of Languedoc by the engineer Riquet, which was designed to join the Mediterranean and the Atlantic and give an impulse to the industry of the south. He abolished the provincial customs in two-thirds of the kingdom in order to facilitate the transport of goods to and from the seaports, and only abandoned his plan of a total abolition in deference to the mistaken opposition of the provinces concerned. He encouraged the nobility to engage in commerce by an edict which permitted those of noble birth to trade without derogation of dignity.[3] To develop the trade of the colonies and engross, if possible, that of the old world with the new, and with Africa, India, and China, he established or reorganised great commercial corporations on the model of the Dutch and English East India Companies,[4] and granted them subsidies and extensive monopolies[5] and privileges, as well as encouragement in building ships and ample protection for their fleets. Their enterprise failed to realise the hopes of the minister, however, or bring an adequate return to the State, or to their shareholders.[6]

As Sully has been blamed for sacrificing industry to agriculture,

[1] See, for instance, Corresp. Admin., iii. 338, 392, 406, 508, 533, 591, 640, 646.

[2] Isambert, xviii. 39.

[3] *Ibid.*, xviii. 217.

[4] See Corresp. Admin., iii. 358 *et seq.*, 502, etc.; cf. Isambert, xviii. 35, 37, 39, 211.

[5] Isambert, xviii. 198.

[6] Tom. iii. of the Corresp. Admin. and tom. ii. of the Lettres, Instructions, et Mémoires contain many official documents relating to Colbert's industrial and commercial administration. See also Histoire de Colbert, i., chaps. xii. and xiii.; Chéruel, Administration de Louis XIV., 90-102, whose account is wanting in discrimination; Perkins, France under the Regency, 110-117, which contains an excellent account of the reign of Louis.

Colbert has been reproached for sacrificing agriculture to industry. The reproach is not altogether unmerited. He regarded agriculture too exclusively from the standpoint of its relation to industry. Its province is chiefly to maintain a large industrial population. A large home consumption was, to his thinking, a better test of prosperity than a large export trade in grain. Cheap and abundant food is an absolute requisite for the maintenance of industry, and Colbert constituted himself the arbiter of agricultural prices. In the famine year of 1661, for instance, he decreed a maximum price, and thus interfered with the law of supply and demand. It is not the case, however, that he systematically depreciated the price of grain in the interest of the manufacturer, or of a policy of aggression. He was indeed hampered by the necessity of assuring a plentiful supply of grain to feed the large armies in the field during the latter half of his administration, but he regulated rather than prohibited the export of corn, reserving to the Council of State the decision of the question of export in accordance with the condition of the harvest. If the harvest was abundant, free export was allowed; if it was only moderate, a duty was imposed; if a year of dearth ensued, or if the exigencies of war rendered prohibition advisable, export was disallowed. Of the fourteen years from 1669 to 1683, prohibition was enforced during five, and if prices fell from the exorbitant rate of Mazarin's administration, they were still nearly one-fourth higher than in the prosperous times of Sully. Colbert, moreover, did not neglect the interest of the peasant. He prohibited the revenue officials and the creditors of the farmer from seizing his cattle in payment of the arrears of the *taille* or of his debts.[1] By the partial abolition of the provincial tolls and the construction of the canals of Languedoc and Orleans he gave an impulse to circulation in the interior. The abundance of stock, the improved cultivation of the soil, to which Sir William Temple bears witness,[2] show that the legislation of Colbert was not without its good effects on agriculture, if the restrictions which often non-plussed the producer and the buyer in his calculations, and discouraged enterprise, remained to show that the reformer was unable to anticipate a more enlightened system of rural economy.

The general principle underlying the reforming activity of monarch and minister is the principle that the government, *i.e.*, Louis himself, is the State. It is the State that does everything, superintends everything. It is the monarch, in the person of the minister, that regulates the finances, creates commercial companies,

[1] Corresp. Admin., iii. 37; cf. Isambert, xviii. 425. [2] Memoirs, ii. 164, 165.

builds ships, revives agriculture, develops manufactures. The nation is directed by royal edict. Richelieu's ideal of centralisation was realised to the fullest in Louis XIV. The real master of Colbert was not Louis, but the great cardinal. His worship of his great predecessor, to whose memory he frequently appealed during the debates in the Council of State, was the butt of Louis' pleasantry. "Here is M. Colbert, who is just going to say, 'Sire, the great Cardinal Richelieu,'" etc. In internal administration the great minister of Louis XIV. achieved what the great minister of Louis XIII. aimed at doing, but was unable, owing to the pressure of a great war, to effect. He made France, for all too brief a period, passingly prosperous as well as powerful, and applied the principle of centralisation even more thoroughly than his predecessor in the subordination of all authority to that of the Crown. The administrative correspondence shows us the prying eye of the government directed towards every phase of the national life, through the governors, intendants, and special commissioners. Parliaments, Provincial Estates, municipalities, clergy, nobility, corporations of every kind were subjected to the strictest and most alert scrutiny. Colbert's finger was always on the national pulse. The absorption not only of all power, but of all jurisdiction is the completion of Richelieu's work, and at this stage of French history an enlightened absolute rule was probably the only effective system of government. Parliaments, Provincial Estates, municipalities, stood in need of correction by a strong hand, and the encroachment on their powers and privileges was to a large extent defensible on grounds of the general interest. Whether the encroachment would ultimately conduce to good government depended on the question whether Louis would conscientiously continue to fill the *rôle* of enlightened despot under the auspices of men like Colbert, and whether centralisation could in the long run prove an adequate substitute for self-government. Certainly its methods were not always above reproach, for the bureaucracy, under the direction of even a Colbert, did not scruple to make use of bribery and other dishonourable means as well as coercion.

He did not dispense altogether with the machinery of local government as represented by the provincial governors, the Provincial Estates, and the free municipalities. The provincial governors were, however, appointed only for three years, and the triennial renewal of their office, which was dependent on their good conduct, ensured their submission to the royal will.[1] If they used their power

[1] Mém. Hist., i. 197, 198.

to oppress the people and foment strife, the nation, as Louis remarks, would become the victim of a number of tyrants. The partition of the sovereignty, in his view, was not merely incompatible with the monarchy, it was inconsistent with the welfare of the people. A feeble king is the worst enemy of the nation. On the same principle he restricted the power of the governors of fortresses, who extorted contributions on the pretext of the public service, and, like the provincial governors, amassed enormous fortunes by the abuse of their office.[1] The same watchful supervision was extended to the Provincial Estates of Languedoc, Dauphiné, Provence, Burgundy, Artois, Guienne, and Brittany, the *pays d'états*, which were allowed to conserve their provincial assemblies, representative of the three orders of clergy, nobility, and Third Estate, and possessed of the right of voting the taxes demanded by the monarch, and of drawing up a *cahier* or statement of grievances and demands. Louis was represented by his commissioners, including the governor and the intendant, whose office had been suppressed during the Fronde and was revived by Mazarin, and whose powers were now enlarged. These assemblies were conservative and local in their views, and, like the States-General, animated by the spirit of class interest and jealousy. They were slow to respond to the demands of a national *régime*, and a rebellious spirit, inspired sometimes by the love of liberty, especially in the case of the Third Estate, occasionally betrayed itself.[2] This opposition to a tyrannic central authority was punished by the suppression of the Estates of Normandy, Maine, Anjou, Touraine, Orleans, Bourbon, Nivernais, Marche, Berry, etc.;[3] in the case of others the astuteness and trickery of the intendant succeeded in rendering it quiescent. When pensions, presents, and other arts of official cajolery failed of effect, threats and even violence were resorted to with gratifying success. The intendant interfered in the elections, and intimidated the cities into voting subservient deputies, by the hint of the withdrawal of their privileges. Strategy occasionally enabled him to dispense with more forcible measures. One of these royal functionaries boasted to Colbert the success of an adroit subterfuge to obviate the opposition of the States of Brittany to a subsidy. He invited the opponents of the demand to a special conference, and got the vote passed by his friends in their absence.[4] The episode is significant of the low level to which popular liberty had sunk, and affords a significant

[1] Méms. Hist., i. 57-61.

[2] See, for instance, Correspondance Administrative, i. 532.

[3] Chéruel, Administration, 68.

[4] Corresp. Admin., i. 540.

hint of what the *régime* of the intendants meant, even under a Colbert. Too often, however, the spirit of opposition was the spirit of hostility to progress and reform by the champions of a liberty that was frequently narrow and egotistic. We find those of Languedoc, for instance, resisting the project of transforming the marshes around Beaucaire and Aigues Mortes into arable land, on the plea that their cultivation would lower the price of corn.[1]

The municipalities were equally hostile to Colbert's reforming schemes, and not more disinterested in their championship of the cause of freedom against centralisation. Municipal government had degenerated into the corrupt hereditary domination of a few of the richer inhabitants, who managed the elections and profited by the privileges which the office of alderman carried with it. The inhabitants were compelled to bear the charges imposed for its own advantage by this corrupt oligarchy, without the right of control. The encroachment of the central power through the intendant was not in these circumstances an unmitigated evil, for the despotism of a clique of local magnates pinched the inhabitants much more severely than the despotism of the government, which ultimately arrogated to itself the right to nominate the mayor,[2] and ordained, in the interest of commerce, that the mercantile class should have its fair share of representation in the large cities.[3] In the municipalities, as in the Provincial Estates, the spirit of conservative selfishness often sought to bar the way to clamant reforms. When, for example, it was a question of enlarging or embellishing a city like Marseilles, the aldermen, complained the intendant Arnoul, grumbled that the erection of new streets would injure the letting of their property in the old quarters of the town.[4] At Bordeaux the same petty spirit displayed itself. Bordeaux claimed a third of the grain exported from the interior provinces by way of the Garonne in order to maintain the cheapness of its supply. Its municipality adduced its ancient privileges in reply to Colbert, who emphasised the loss to the commerce of the nation, but to this particularistic spirit, the commerce of the nation was of far less importance than the conservation of its privileges. It was, in many cases, no less hostile to the establishment of workshops and factories in these haunts of stagnant egotism. It is more deserving of sympathy when it arose from a dread of centralisation, which threatened to destroy municipal autonomy, and controlled the traditional restiveness of cities like

[1] Corresp. Admin., i. 120.

[2] Isambert, xx. 158-164; Raynouard, Histoire du Droit Municipal, ii. 355.

[3] Corresp. Admin., i. 752-757.

[4] *Ibid.*, i.

Bordeaux and La Rochelle by the erection of fortresses in or near them.[1]

While Louis respected, in form at least, the jurisdiction of the more docile of the Provincial Estates, he acted the part of the despot pure and simple towards the Parliaments, and tolerated no parliamentary interference in political affairs. The Parliaments, as we have seen in the episode of the Fronde and other crises in French history, claimed to represent the States-General and control the administration as well as dispense justice. The claim had even been supported by the States-General of Blois in 1566-67, which declared that all edicts were subject to the verification and sanction of the Parliament of Paris as the embodiment of the Estates in miniature. Nay, President De Mesmes had defended the contention that the Parliament was superior to the States-General, on the ground that they were the judges of what the Estates had resolved, and that, while the States-General only possessed the right of petition, the Parliaments were the mediators between the king and the people.[2] These pretensions Louis XIV. was determined on no account to tolerate. "The elevation of the Parliaments," he complains, "proved dangerous to the whole kingdom during my minority. It was necessary to abase them, less because of the evil they had done than for what they might cause in the future. The opposition of their authority to mine, however good their intentions might have been, produced very ill effects in the State, and threatened to nullify all my great and useful enterprises. It was just that utility should carry it over all other considerations, and reduce all things to their legitimate and natural order."[3] He was unable to conceive that the interest of the prince could be opposed to that of the people, or that the people should seek or require any defender besides himself. The tranquillity of the State demanded obedience even to a bad prince, and therefore the exercise of political power by the Parliaments, in any conceivable circumstance, was inadmissible. He did not deprive them of the right of remonstrance against the royal edicts, but he minimised and practically rendered it null. The ordinance of April 1667 allowed the Parliament of Paris eight days to make representations in regard to decrees, and six weeks in the case of those situated at a distance from the place of the king's residence,

[1] See for the Provincial Estates and the municipalities, M. Depping's instructive introduction to tom. i. of the Correspondance Administrative, i. 1-43.

[2] Journal d'Olivier D'Ormesson in Chéruel, Administration de Louis XIV., 42-44.

[3] Méms. Hist., i. 53, 54.

after which they were to be held as published and strictly observed.[1] This ordinance was subsequently rendered more explicit by letters patent dated February 1673, which defined the procedure of registration, and prohibited all opposition on pain of suspension. The edicts must be registered "without modification, restriction, or other clauses which might hinder their full and entire execution." Remonstrances might be submitted after registration, within eight days and six weeks respectively, but it depended on the royal pleasure to take such remonstrances into consideration or not, and no fresh remonstrances were permissible.[2] On the eighth day the Parliament was usually, during his reign, obsequiously silent. It showed at first a disposition to murmur at the application of the muzzle, but the threat of the royal displeasure was too terrible an alternative to be braved, as in the days of the regency of Anne of Austria.[3] The force which had marshalled the hosts of the League and the Fronde in revolt against the royal authority, was overawed by the majesty of the throne for the next half-century.[4] The parliamentary history between the spirited political activity of the League and the Fronde and the revival of the parliamentary opposition to absolutism under Louis XV., is almost a blank as far as constitutional history is concerned. In this sense the Parliaments have no history during the reign of Louis XIV. They were not even allowed to console their vanity with the semblance of power or pretension, for Louis changed the title "sovereign courts" into that of "courts superior," accorded precedence to the clergy in State ceremony, and revoked the privilege of nobility granted to the members of the higher courts in 1644.[5] Petty quarrels between the members, contests for precedence with the clergy or the lower courts, relieved occasionally by the defence of justice against the juridical jurisdiction of the municipalities of the provincial capitals and the nobles, and by the advocacy of the royal authority against the pretensions of the Pope,[6] make up the records of the Parliaments as public bodies during three-quarters of a century.

[1] Isambert, xviii. 105, 106.

[2] *Ibid.*, xix. 70-73.

[3] M. de Cogneux, says Ormesson, *àpropos* of the sitting of 12th January 1666, "se leve et chacun le suivit l'un après l'autre, et ainsi la compagnie se separa sans qu'il y fut dict une seulle parolle, la consternation paroissant sur le visage de tous" (Chéruel, 50). There are, however, instances of friction between the government and the Parliaments (see Correspondance Administrative, ii. 191, 198, 240).

[4] See Mémoires Historiques, i. 47-56, and ii. 47, 48; cf. Voltaire, Histoire du Parlement.

[5] *Ibid.*, i. 48-51.

[6] See, for instance, Correspondance Administrative, ii. 368; cf. Mémoires Historiques, i. 52-54.

The former champions of political liberty are found waging a ridiculous warfare over trivial points of etiquette, which affords evidence alike of their pettiness and impotence. At Aix, for example, the councillors of the Chamber of Accounts, finding their entrance into the cathedral barred by order of their rivals of the Parliament, on the occasion of some solemnity, protested their rights with more energy than dignity. An irascible councillor, seizing the musket of one of the guards, mounted the iron grating and pointed it at the first president, who took refuge behind one of the stalls. After the ceremony the unlucky president was pursued by the gentlemen of the Chamber of Accounts, and forced to take to his heels amid a shower of stones, trailing his majestic robes in the mud. This ridiculous zeal for the punctilios of etiquette transformed the respect of former generations into contempt, and furnished the Chancellor Pontchartrain with a text for a much-needed and oft-repeated homily. "I am astonished," wrote he to one of these touchy worthies, "that the magistrates carry the false idea of their elevation to the point of imagining that they suffer degradation if any one should fail to show them the deference to which they think themselves entitled, as if their dignity consisted merely in a vain exterior, and as if the noble simplicity of the office of magistrate, backed by a solid merit, and joined to an inviolable attachment to justice, was not the sole and veritable means of earning the esteem and veneration of the public."[1]

Louis not only suppressed the political power of the Parliaments, he arbitrarily encroached on their juridical functions. He arrogated the sole right to interpret, and even dispense with, as well as make the laws. He was the measure of justice as of liberty. He extended the right of appeal from the decisions of the law courts to the royal council, and made ample use of *lettres de cachet*, or secret warrants, which enabled him to imprison obnoxious, and frequently innocent persons without appeal to the courts. The Parliaments were no longer the guardians of the liberty of the subject for which they had contended so nobly in former reigns. A piece of paper, signed by the monarch or the chancellor, sufficed to confine for life, in one of the State dungeons, some unfortunate victim of despotism. Richelieu had made use of special tribunals to silence or strike down his foes. Louis silenced them by arbitrary warrant, as if neither law nor law court existed. The victim could not demand a trial, nor could the Parliaments demand it for him. A multitude of individuals disappeared behind the bars of these gloomy dungeons and were heard of no more. Justice could not reach them, and they

[1] Corresp. Admin., ii. 376, 377.

were even deprived of the privilege of a confessor, if the government deemed it advisable. The *régime* of the secret police was another fruit of this terrible abuse which the Parliaments were impotent to control. The least sign of independence, the slightest tendency to criticise or resist arbitrary power, was noted by the legion of government spies, who opened letters[1] and haunted the taverns, and punished by the loss of liberty. Louis seemed to divine the power of the press, for he was the bitter persecutor of the publicist who dared to have opinions and print them. The censor saw in every expression of independent opinion[2] a libel against the monarch, who alone possessed the right to think and speak as he pleased. The age which produced so many masterpieces in literature, was the age in which liberty of thought and criticism was repressed with the most autocratic watchfulness. Chancellor Pontchartrain was a most relentless critic, and against his fiat there was no appeal, except in the most clandestine fashion, to a more indulgent public. To many a poor author, eager to enlighten mankind and sorely in need of louis d'ors, the chancellor meted out nothing but humiliation and starvation. "Enough of this," he would curtly burst out, in reply to the plausible explanations, or the urgent importunities of the would-be man of letters, "you authors have a most monstrous itch for writing." And with this sentence ringing in his ears the luckless author was compelled to pocket his manuscript and his hopes without possibility of appeal, and if in desperation, he had recourse to the expedient of printing his book in Holland, or at one of the secret presses of the capital, he ran the risk of being tracked down by the police, and thrown into the Bastille or sent to the galleys.

In spite of the juridical abuses which Louis encouraged or inaugurated, the Grands Jours d'Auvergne and the Code Louis remind us that he is entitled to the merit of attempting something for the reform of the laws and the repression of lawlessness. In 1665 a special commission, known as the Grands Jours d'Auvergne,[3] was deputed to visit this province and the neighbouring districts, and punish the turbulence of the nobility, which signalised itself by its contempt for justice and its brutal oppression of the people. Its proceedings revealed a state of society worthy of the worst times of mediæval anarchy.[4] Many of the grand seigneurs of the type of a

[1] Mémoires de St Simon, xii. 72, 73.

[2] See, for instance, Correspondance Administrative, ii. 176-178, 188, etc., and cf. the Introduction by M. Depping.

[3] Isambert, xviii. 60, 63.

[4] See Corresp. Admin., ii. 160, 190; cf. 143.

Canillac were convicted of murder, extortion, plunder, and only saved their heads by a timely flight. Several hundreds of these cut-throats were condemned to the block or the galleys, and their property confiscated; others were only saved from the same sentence by the blandishments of the ladies of Clermont, whose beauty captivated more than one of the commissioners. They sent glowing reports of the efficacy of their labours to Colbert. "Never before," wrote one of these officials, "have the Auvergnese known that they have a king. . . . Never before has there been such consternation among the grandees, and such joy in the hearts of the people."[1] They completed their beneficent judicial labours by drawing up a number of regulations for the purpose of diminishing the local jurisdiction of the nobility and restraining future abuse, but their operations were too limited and transient to entitle them to claim the merit of the inscription on the medal, struck to commemorate the event, that "they had vindicated the provinces from the oppression of the seigneurs." Similar courts were held in the Cevennes by a commission of the Parliament of Toulouse, and by D'Aguesseau in Limousin.[2] In Colbert's view these commissions were merely the forerunner of a grand tour of inspection throughout the kingdom by Louis himself, who should be accompanied by a train of judges, and demand in person an account of their stewardship from the provincial Parliaments. The king, he held, would be better employed in making such a progress than in those pompous journeys of State which merely displayed to the people the magnificence and extravagance of a dissipated court. He cherished, too, large views of juridical reform, though we find him, in accordance with the practice of the time, soliciting from the judges a favourable decision in favour of his friends.[3] Louis should earn the far more substantial glory of enacting a uniform jurisprudence and free justice. This grand scheme was only partially realised by a Commission of Justice appointed in 1665, to codify the civil and criminal law in accordance with the programme sketched by Colbert in a memoir to Louis on the subject, and embracing, besides the unification and emendation of the laws, such practical reforms as the reduction of the number of judges, the abolition of the venality and heredity of the judicial office, the establishment of an efficient police, etc.[4] The commission, of which Pussort and Colbert himself were the leading spirits, issued the celebrated ordinance dealing with the civil law in April

[1] Corresp. Admin., ii. 165. [2] Méms. Hist., ii. 240.
[3] Histoire de Colbert, ii. 460-462.
[4] Isambert, xviii. 100-103; cf. Chéruel, Administration, 111-127.

1667,[1] and three years later (August 1670), that dealing with the criminal law.[2] This reform, in spite of many admirable enactments, left much for the future to abolish. It allowed the secret procedure at trials to subsist, left untouched the multiplicity of the tribunals, the severity of the penal laws, the wretched administration of the prisons, the arbitrary evocation of suits from the ordinary courts to the royal council, and, by the retention of torture, afforded ample scope for the crusade to be headed in the following century by Beccaria, Voltaire, and Montesquieu on behalf of a more rational and humane jurisprudence.

From the reform activity of the first half of Louis' reign we turn to glance at its foreign policy. That policy had very important national as well as international effects, and from this point of view merits our attention. It certainly is not lacking in that kind of grandeur which consists in dramatic and far-reaching action. Louis was a man of ambitious flights, grandiose purposes, and Europe as well as France felt the influence of his characteristic personality. He was, moreover, indisputably the most powerful potentate of his time, and he assuredly was not the man to hide the consciousness of the fact under a bushel. As the result of the work of Henry and Sully, Richelieu and Mazarin, the modern French monarchy was not only supreme within, it had become the preponderant power in Europe, and Louis was the very man to pose as the *grand roi par excellence*. Unfortunately both for France and Europe, the peaceful preponderance contemplated by Henry was not the preponderance conceived by his grandson, who in other respects took him for his model. It soared beyond the moderate bounds fixed by Richelieu and Mazarin.[3] It was the preponderance of a restless and unlimited ambition, acting on a nature that to the sense of the grand added the thirst of personal glory and aggrandisement. That ambition embraced not the absorption of a few provinces, whose incorporation seemed politically necessary for the interests of France, but the annexation of kingdoms and empires. He will obliterate the Pyrenees and the Rhine, will subjugate Holland, will incorporate, or at least divide Spain, will wear the imperial crown. A universal supremacy is alone compatible with his sense of his destiny. He did not start with these large schemes in their entirety. They grew with the passion for power, but he allowed them all too soon to seduce him from the path of sane and beneficent statesmanship, and waste the resources of a powerful and prosperous kingdom in vast and egoistic

[1] Isambert, xviii. 103-190. [2] *Ibid.*, xviii. 371-423.

[3] See the lucid memoir of Lisola in Rousset, Histoire de Louvois, i. 27-29.

enterprises. We have heard his profession of devotion to the interests of the people, have seen his striving, in co-operation with a patriotic minister, to realise a high ideal of duty. The time came when destiny took the place of duty, and the welfare of the nation was sacrificed to a colossal egotism, comparable to that of a Napoleon, when a powerful army and navy, created and maintained by the development of commerce and industry, should sweep every human obstacle from the path of the would-be dictator of Europe. Le Tellier, aided by his indefatigable son, Louvois, toiled at the reorganisation of the army. Its numbers were indeed reduced after the Peace of the Pyrenees, but the vigorous reform of organisation, training, discipline, and administration, in which Louvois, in particular, displayed a master hand, rendered it the efficient instrument of an aggressive policy.[1] The energy of Louvois was equalled by the assiduity with which Colbert and his son Seignelay created a powerful navy. At the death of Mazarin the navy consisted of about a score of unseaworthy hulks; in 1671, two years after Colbert assumed the active direction of the ministry of marine, the number had risen to one hundred and ninety-six. The conscription enabled him to man them with efficient crews from the large merchant navy, which had likewise developed so marvellously under his auspices. He built or enlarged harbours as well as ships, and Toulon, Brest, Havre, Rochefort, Dunkirk, became the fortified headquarters of a number of squadrons which ventured to dispute with England or Holland the supremacy of the sea.[2] Colbert's ideal in taking up Richelieu's policy of creating a powerful navy was, however, not conquest or hazardous ambition, but the extension and protection of French commerce and colonial expansion. To his initiative was due the flourishing condition of the French colonies in North America and the West Indies at this period, and the annexation by La Salle of the vast territory south of Canada and eastwards of the New England colonies, to which, in honour of Louis XIV., he gave the name of Louisiana. The ultimate ascendency of Louvois, and the growing passion for schemes of aggressive and martial glory, unhappily hampered and eventually blighted the activity and the plans of Colbert. Four campaigns, extending over nearly thirty years, or almost one-half of Louis' active

[1] See Mémoires Historiques, i. 56-61, 205-207; ii. 13-16, 40, 41, 89-92; cf. Rousset, Histoire de Louvois, i., chap. iii.

[2] For Colbert's naval administration, and that of his son, see tom. iii. of the Lettres et Instructions; Clément, Histoire de Colbert, i. chaps. xv. and xvi.; and the numerous ordinances on the subject in Isambert, xviii. and xix., particularly the great Ordinance de la Marine of August 1681 (xix. 282-336).

reign, were the result of this deviation from sane statesmanship into the path of wild ambition on the part of the monarch, who shut his ears to the warning voice of his wiser counsellor and good genius.

This long period of gigantic warfare opened with every indication of future tranquillity. Forty years of conflict had just been terminated by the Peace of the Pyrenees, and the Treaties of Oliva and Copenhagen. Exhausted Europe had, one might infer, had its fill of carnage for generations to come. Louis' mind was at this period more bent on peaceful reform than on camps and battles. The fame of Condé, consummate general at twenty-one, was doubtless an object of emulation to a monarch unable to bear a glory that was not his own. For him there could be no greatness but that which reflected his own, and in this weakness lay one of the worst elements of the intolerable egoism of the man, which affected to be the embodiment of all perfection as well as all power. He never would learn that hard lesson to be satisfied with being himself, and became in consequence the parody of himself in spite of all the adulation, the nauseous self-abnegation of his courtiers, who, strange to say, included men of the highest powers. For the present, however, he was too engrossed in the work of government to desire to lend to his sceptre the refulgence of the sword. The foreign policy of his *début* was a peace policy, however martial his instincts. Louis talked on this subject as a wise man. "Be always prepared to make yourself formidable by force of arms, but only employ arms by force of necessity."[1] To break one of those intervals of repose, so rare in the history of Europe, was criminal, and in the meantime the *carrousel*, the chase, the tournament, not war and camps, were his favourite pastimes. Peace, he concludes[2] a survey of the nations, is the policy of all his neighbours. Spain was more exhausted than France, and had irrevocably lost that dangerous preponderance which France, thanks to Richelieu and Mazarin, had secured. Philip IV. was, besides, too busy with the effort to maintain his supremacy over Portugal to disturb the Treaty of the Pyrenees. Emperor Leopold gave him no cause for uneasiness. Germany was crippled by the Thirty Years' War, and the Union of the Rhine, a master stroke of Mazarin's diplomacy, enabled him to count most of the Rhine princes among his firm allies. Sweden and Denmark had inherited from the Thirty Years' War the tradition of friendship for France. Holland's great interest was the preservation and development of her commerce. Most of the Italian States were friendly or too weak to afford to be hostile, the Pope, Alexander VII., too isolated to be

[1] Méms. Hist., i. 189. [2] *Ibid.*, i. 14-19.

troublesome. Finally, England had too many internal wounds to heal to think of war, and Charles II. was a personal friend. The aspect of both present and future was thus very reassuring. If Louis will keep the peace, it is evident, on his own confession, that no one will interfere with his repose.

The only danger lay in his excessive self-assertion. In his relations with foreign States he was prone to talk the language of the dictator, and foreign potentates might not take his autocratic ways as submissively as his own subjects. He was as jealous for the rights of his ambassadors, however arrogant, as for his own prerogative, and treated some fancy point of etiquette with all the seriousness of a great State question. The dispute between his ambassador and that of the King of Spain for the place of honour in a procession at London called forth overbearing protests, and even threats of war. He could afford to bully Philip IV., and he indited a haughty and spirited letter to Charles II. to frighten him, by similar threats, into the renunciation of the English claim to precedence on the sea. His admirals should no longer lower the French flag to that of England, even if he had to fight to maintain the respect due to so great a potentate. "The King of England and his chancellor may see for themselves what is the state of my forces; they cannot see my heart. I shall know how to maintain my rights whatever happens"[1] This tendency to indulge in haughty language over trivial matters of dispute, which did not spare sovereigns of the first rank, knew no bounds towards the weak. Pope Alexander had the audacity to dispute the traditional right of asylum attached to the French embassy at Rome. Blows were exchanged between the papal guards and the attendants of the Duc de Crequi. Both sides angrily demanded atonement for the insult. Louis' sense of his majesty did not allow him to be impartial, and a highly pitched ultimatum conveyed the challenge to give immediate satisfaction, or take the consequences. The luckless Pope, whose predecessors once deposed kings, was compelled to yield, and profess in humble terms his profound respect and fidelity towards the French monarch. Innocent XI., Alexander's successor, experienced equally harsh treatment on the renewal of the quarrel. It availed not to instance the renunciation by other Catholic sovereigns of a right that militated against the public security of the papal capital. Louis haughtily retorted that it was not his custom to regulate his conduct by the example of others, and that it was his prerogative to serve as a model to his fellow-potentates.[2] Genoa fared even worse for its presumption in pre-

[1] Œuvres de Louis XIV., v. 67. [2] Voltaire, Siècle de Louis XIV., 165, 166.

ferring the friendship of Spain to that of France. The high spirit with which it maintained its independence was punished by the bombardment and destruction of a whole quarter of the city, and its Doge was forced to undergo the humiliation of publicly supplicating the forgiveness of the modern Jupiter in the audience hall of the Olympus at Versailles.[1] Jupiter Tonans affected to embody the preponderance of France towards Europe as well as fill the *rôle* of undisputed master in his own dominions, and he had the satisfaction of being imitated as well as hated. His court became the model of all courts. His social as well as his political influence was enormous. Every petty potentate copied the master potentate of Versailles, and rated some other potentate still more petty with an arrogance as stupendous as it was ridiculous. Every German and Italian capital had its Louis, who expended his self-importance on some unlucky pope or doge in miniature.

Louis' attitude towards Spain tended, too, sooner or later, to provoke war. It was from the outset one of veiled hostility and bad faith, which, if persisted in, could only end in a rupture. That rupture was in turn destined to lead to a European war in the near sequel, and from this war sprang two gigantic conflicts of fatal consequence to France. The question out of which this series of conflicts directly or indirectly arose was the question of the Spanish succession. "One may say," remarks Mignet, "that the Spanish succession was the pivot on which nearly the whole of the reign of Louis XIV. turned. It occupied his foreign policy and his armies during more than fifty years. It created the grandeur of its commencement, and the miseries of its end."[2] There is exaggeration in this statement. The fact that Philip IV. had only one son by his second marriage, and that this son, the sickly Charles II., had no bodily heir, and kept Europe in hourly expectation of his death for forty years, certainly made the question of the succession to the Spanish throne a subject of anxiety to the diplomatists of Paris and other courts throughout the greater part of Louis' reign. But the question only became a practical question on the death of Charles in 1700, and Louis had other plans of aggrandisement wherewith to keep himself and Europe busy in the meantime. Still, his determination to filch a portion of the Spanish dominions, on some pretext or other, was fruitful of much strife—military as well as diplomatic.

[1] Journal de Dangeau, i. 47, 60-63.

[2] Mignet's Négociations relatives à la Succession d'Espagne, edited for the Documents Inédits, i., Introduction, 53. This great work is a veritable mine for the foreign policy of Louis.

He was the husband of Maria Theresa, Philip's eldest daughter, b his first marriage. Maria had renounced her right to the succession t the throne of Spain on her marriage to Louis, but her husband, o rather Lionne, had, in the marriage treaty, only recognised the validit of this renunciation on condition of the payment of her dowry o 50,000 crowns. The non-payment of this sum, for which he care little, furnished him with a pretext for claiming the Spanish crown o behalf of his wife. This claim he could only enforce on the deat of the heir presumptive, and while awaiting this consummation h found a pretext for getting possession, on the death of Philip, of a least Franche Comté and the Spanish Netherlands, in the law o devolution in vogue in certain provinces of the Netherlands. Thi law conferred the paternal inheritance on the children of the firs marriage in preference to those of the second. It applied, howeve only to private property, but Louis conveniently read into it a politica significance in justification of his right to annex Flanders, Brabant and Franche Comté. He advocated his right at Madrid with all th earnestness of a man who was convinced of the righteousness of hi cause; but while he appeared to insist on the payment of the dowr as an alternative settlement of the question, he took care to moderate his zeal whenever he observed that his father-in-law seemed inclined to comply.[1] His tactics reveal, in fact, the set purpose to filch o compel the concession of his demands, in spite of treaty obligations He allowed himself a latitude of interpretation of these obligations which shows a portentous sense of his superiority to them. It was his settled conviction that treaties between France and Spain coul never be permanent, and that neither side, in making them, was sincere. Evidently Louis was not, and his conception of interna tional morality was not above that of his time. In this respect h was not much in advance of Louis XI., and greatly behind Henr IV. "The relations of the two crowns of France and Spain," h remarks, "are now such, and have indeed been for long, that yo cannot elevate the one without abasing the other. This causes jealousy between them which, if I may dare say, is essential, a specie of permanent enmity which treaties may veil, but cannot extinguish . . . And to speak the truth without disguise, they never conclud a treaty unless in this spirit. Whatever specious clauses of unio friendship, and mutual advantage are inserted, the real sense whic each side attaches to such agreements, proved by the experience o so many years, is, that they will ostentatiously abstain from ho tilities and from all public demonstrations of bad faith, but expe

[1] Voltaire, Siècle de Louis XIV., 95.

mutual infractions. 'Thus we may say that, in mutually dispensing themselves from the observance of treaties, they are really not guilty of contravening them, because they do not bind themselves by their terms."[1] Bad faith towards Spain is thus a cardinal doctrine of Louis' political creed. He had evidently not neglected Mazarin's advice to cultivate with care the royal talent of dissimulation, with which nature had amply endowed him. To excuse this Machiavellian policy by crediting your opponent with it, was a handy device to secure a good working conscience, but the petty infractions on the side of Spain were hardly justification for wholesale infractions on the side of France, and they were surely capable of explanation and compromise. Moreover, to take advantage of this convenient assumption at a time when his adversary was hard pressed by the ill-fortune of a struggle with a foreign power, might be good policy in the pupil of Mazarin, but this diplomacy was incompatible with the pacific resolutions professed by Louis, and could only end in sudden invasion and other acts of violence, for which France as well as Europe was ultimately to pay a terrible price in blood and treasure.

Louis had the advantage of being served, in the pursuit of this tortuous policy, by a minister of foreign affairs who was a master of his craft. Lionne possessed great penetration, a complete grasp of the European situation, and a singular adroitness in using his knowledge of men and affairs. The external interests of France were not likely to suffer in the hands of a man who shared with Mazarin the glory of the Treaties of Westphalia and the Pyrenees. Louis trusted him implicitly, and himself wrote his eulogy with more than the scanty recognition which his jealous and suspicious temperament usually bestowed on his ministers.[2] The minister lived to regret the aggressive impulse which he at first encouraged, but which he was unable ultimately to control. His death in 1671, on the eve of the invasion of Holland, removed the strong hand that might have moderated the fatal ascendency of Louvois. Under the auspices of the great diplomatist, Louis succeeded with a masterly facility in over-matching the Spanish monarch. The first decade of his foreign policy was as prosperous, from the standpoint of success, as the first decade of his internal administration. He assiduously cultivated the goodwill of Charles II. of England by the marriage of his brother, Philip of Orleans, with Charles' sister, Henrietta, in the hope of maintaining the anti-Spanish policy of Cromwell. To the same end he helped Charles himself to a spouse in the person of the Infanta of Portugal.[3] He mediated an arrangement of the dispute between

[1] Mémes. Hist., i. 63-65. [2] *Ibid.*, i. 32, 33. [3] *Ibid.*, i. 65-68.

Holland and Portugal, and concluded with the Republic a commercial and defensive treaty in order to assure himself against the possibility of a Dutch alliance with Spain. The Treaty of the Pyrenees bound him not to assist the Portuguese in their struggle to throw off the yoke of Philip IV. He nevertheless did not scruple to furnish Marshal Schomberg with the means to maintain the contingent of 4,000 French soldiers in the Portuguese army. This intervention on behalf of a people struggling for independence would have been laudable enough if it had not been a contravention of an important treaty, not yet two years old. The victory of Villa Viciosa by which the pretensions of Philip were finally shattered, and which hastened his death in September 1665, was largely due to the ill-disguised services of his son-in-law. Alliances with Denmark, the Swiss Cantons, Brandenburg, and the consolidation and extension of the Union of the Rhine, were so many additional steps in the development of the plot, whose execution was to be the work not of diplomacy, but of arms. Louis and Lionne manœuvred and schemed to ally Europe in support of a policy whose *denouement* the greater part of Europe viewed with apprehension. This *denouement* was nothing less than the invasion and seizure of the Spanish Netherlands and Franche Comté. It was retarded by the outbreak of war between England and Holland, to the chagrin of Louis, who was compelled by treaty to support the Dutch. He declared war against Charles, and made a show of actively supporting his ally. In reality he rather observed than participated in the sanguinary encounters in which the Dutch and English navies weakened each other for his advantage. His secret efforts were directed to negotiating a truce with Charles in the hope of securing his co-operation, in case the Dutch should refuse to pay for his assistance by the recognition of the forthcoming seizure of Belgium. He played the *rôle* of ally on the understanding that the ally might erelong become the enemy, and he succeeded admirably in his purpose at the cost of profuse falsehood. While amusing the cabinet of Madrid with artful negotiations, and appearing to take the States-General into his confidence, he was getting his army ready for the march into Flanders. A royal missive suddenly announced to the Spanish regent that, while harbouring no intention of breaking the peace, the French monarch had resolved to take possession of the territory which the King of Spain had usurped. The grand scheme, so long hedged about with secrecy and dissimulation, was carried out with startling swiftness and ostentation towards the end of May 1667. Louis marched at the head of a brilliant court as well as a powerful army.

It required thirty thousand horses to draw the carriages of his enormous suite.[1] Mistresses, courtiers, ministers, escorted the hero of the plot, and dazzled the Flemish people with their luxury and pomp. Turenne was there to lend the splendour of his name to the petty skirmishes, the one day sieges, the demonstrations of braggadocio which did duty for the heroics of a grand campaign. Louis performed the immortal feat of exposing himself to gunshot, and flattery honoured in him the greatest soldier of the day. After three months of this species of grandiose campaigning, in which gallantry towards the fair sex was as conspicuous as gallantry towards an enemy of straw, Louis promenaded back to St Germain, leaving Turenne to complete the heroic task.[2]

Some months later, during the winter of 1668, was performed the second act of Louis' masterpiece, in which the hero again appeared, this time minus his harem, and the genius of Condé flashed its brilliance once more in the eyes of astonished Europe. Franche Comté was invaded, and Besançon and Dôle captured in the space of a fortnight. Astonished Europe might well ask, "Where is the emperor?" The emperor had been an extremely uneasy spectator of events that proclaimed the decadence of the power of the Habsburg race. Leopold, as the husband of the young King of Spain's sister, had a very special interest in the fate of his brother-in-law's dominions. He, too, had been speculating on the grand question of the Spanish succession, which thus threatened to attain a partial solution without his intervention. His silence and inactivity were explained by the fact that he had come to an understanding with his rival over a partition of the booty, which anticipated by thirty years the partition treaties negotiated by William III., in the event of the death of the infirm child who wore the crown of Spain. A few days before Louis' departure for Franche Comté, a secret treaty was signed at Vienna, by which Louis was to annex the Two Sicilies, Spanish Navarre, part of Catalonia, and the Philippine Islands, besides Belgium and Franche Comté; Leopold the rest. The emperor could certainly afford to keep quiet. Not so Holland, which saw in this violent disregard of the balance of power a menace to its interests, and allied itself with England and Sweden to check it. Before the

[1] Mémoires du Comte de Coligny-Saligny, edited by Monmerqué for the Société de l'Histoire de France, 123, 124.

[2] For the negotiations preceding the invasion of Flanders see Mémoires Historiques, ii., and Mignet, Négociations relatives à la Succession d'Espagne, i. and ii.; for the military operations see Mémoires Militaires de Louis XIV., edited by Grimoard, tom. iii. of the Œuvres.

opposition of this Triple Alliance, Louis agreed to moderate his demands. Spain was forced to accept the inevitable and cede Lille, Tournay, Charleroi, and other Flemish cities, in return for Franche Comté. For the present, Europe was saved from an international struggle, and Colbert might with peace of mind return to his finances (Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, 2nd May 1668).

The policy which led to these startling events has been defended on the ground of Spanish misrule in the invaded territories.[1] The government of Spain was both an alien and an oppressive government. This is true, but it was at least legitimate, and Louis' motives were not those of philanthropy, but of ambition. Once launched on the path of aggression, he was not likely to stop at the point at which the Triple Alliance had arrested him. His policy was one of aggression; he did not consult or care for the wishes of the inhabitants in a matter of this kind, and there was nothing to prevent him, if expediency suggested, from seizing the greater part of Germany or Italy on similar pretexts. We shall see this policy in operation on a larger scale before many years have passed. An aggressive ambition is not the best standard of right or wrong, however plausible the arguments by which it may recommend itself, and thirty years of war was a heavy price for Europe to pay for its supposed efficacy.

The Republic had presumed to thwart the demigod of Versailles. Still worse, it had the unspeakable audacity to boast of its triumph. Jean de Witt and his confreres of the States-General posed as the saviours of Europe, and were reputed to have published this fact, without stint of self-glorification, in the durable form of a medal. They had some grounds for the boast that they "had asserted the laws, purified the faith, succoured, defended, and reconciled kings; freed the seas, conquered a glorious peace, and re-established the tranquillity of Europe." There was at least the consciousness of three-quarters of a century of manful struggle to mitigate the bombastic eloquence of this reputed inscription, but boasting was the exclusive privilege of the King of France, and behold his privilege invaded with a vengeance! This was a bitterer dose to swallow than the retrocession of Franche Comté. For a plucky little Republic, which had crossed the path of the grand potentate, to have the consciousness of its exploits, was intolerable. Heer van Beuninghen, the rugged Dutch ambassador, was not the man to smooth the irritation of inexhaustible arrogance. Louis meditated vengeance with all the tenacity of a fixed idea. "I confess," he wrote, "that

[1] See, for instance, Perkins, France under the Regency, 67-69.

their insolence cut me to the quick."[1] The conquest of Holland was now the grand motive, and the motive was all the more potent inasmuch as it propitiated alike his anger and his ambition. Holland should feel his vengeance, and its conquest should at the same time ensure him the possession of Belgium, on which he was still bent. So far his policy had been a policy of pure calculation. Calculation was now dominated by resentment, and this resentment was a terrible force in the hands of Louvois, minister of war since 1668. Louvois' ascendency was now unquestionable, and Colbert was no longer the guiding spirit of the administration.

The first act of the new plot was to isolate Holland. To this end Louis exercised his diplomacy to detach England and Sweden from the Triple Alliance. He despatched an astrologer to draw a horoscope for the enlightenment of Charles II. in the mysteries of future policy. The maladroit abbé tried his powers on a horse race, and blundered lamentably. If he could not tell the Duke of Monmouth which horse would win, how could he tell Charles which policy was the safe one? Madame Henrietta was substituted for the astrologer, and with Madame came Mdlle. de Kerhouel, the future Duchess of Portsmouth. The blandishments of Madame and Mademoiselle succeeded beyond expectation. The mercenary and profligate Charles agreed to abandon an ally whose hostile cannon had lately been heard booming in the Thames, and co-operate in that ally's destruction, for a large bribe and a share of the spoil. Nay, he would break his coronation oath, and turn Catholic for an additional £150,000 (Secret Treaty of Dover, May 1670). Sweden, the third member of the Triple Alliance, was likewise bribed to sign an obligation to make a diversion in Louis' favour in Germany against the Electors of Brandenburg and Saxony, who were inclined to espouse the cause of the Republic. Bribery likewise secured the co-operation and the goodwill of the rest of the German princes. Colbert's thrifty management of the revenue enabled Louis to become the paymaster of Europe, and in these circumstances Lionne's only difficulty was when to find greedy potentates, like the Bishops of Münster and Strasburg, sober enough to do business. The bait of the Spanish succession served to extort the promise of the emperor not to assist the Dutch, at the very time that Louis' ambition was contemplating the eventuality of placing the imperial crown on his own head.

In this desperate plight the Republic had recourse to the feeble succour of its hereditary enemy, and concluded an alliance with Spain. The danger was increased by the outbreak of intestine

[1] See unpublished memoir in Rousset, Histoire de Louvois, i. 519.

quarrels between the republican party, headed by Jean de Witt, and the monarchic faction of the Prince of Orange. Sure of vengeance, Louis now indulged in the most haughty and insulting language towards a State whose republican institutions were an offence to his monarchic instincts, and whose resistance to his aggressive policy had wounded his arrogance to the quick. It was a vast condescension on his part even to listen to the representatives of a nation of merchants, which owed its existence to an act of usurpation. De Witt swallowed the vulgar insults, and tried in vain every expedient to obviate a struggle. The tariff war which had rasped the relations of the two States since 1667, gave place to a declaration of hostilities on the 4th April 1772, which should ruin not only the commerce, but the very existence of the Republic. With a full treasury, a network of alliances, a splendidly equipped army at his disposal, the realisation of this project bade fair to be the work of a second military promenade, headed by the king himself, and directed by Turenne, Condé, Luxemburg, and Vauban.

The immediate results seemed to justify this confidence. The passage of the Rhine—a very common-place affair, which flattery and vanity magnified into a prodigy, in honour of the occasion—opened the grand promenade. Louis had only to advance to witness the surrender of fortress after fortress, until by the end of June Utrecht, Overyssel, Gueldres were overrun, and Amsterdam and the Hague were in hourly expectation of capture. It availed not that De Ruyter maintained the great traditions of the Dutch fleet in the desperate battle of Southwold Bay, and in a second fierce encounter in the following year off the Texel, though his heroic efforts prevented an English, in addition to a French invasion. Hardly a skirmish on land disturbed the pompous monotony of Louis' progress. To arrest it and save what remained uninvaded, the States-General offered imploringly the cession of Dutch Flanders and Brabant. Louis would be satisfied with nothing less than the virtual recognition of his supremacy over the Republic, besides an additional concession of territory. The arrogance and animosity which, under Louvois' auspices, inspired such an ultimatum, overmatched themselves. He had, opportunely for the Dutch, hesitated to make a dash at Amsterdam after the passage of the Rhine, and had, moreover, overlooked one potent fact, viz., the effect of his demands on a people which, in the last resort, could call in the omnipotent alliance of the sea. Before De Groot arrived at the Hague as the bearer of this crushing ultimatum, a revolution had created the Prince of Orange Stadholder and Captain-General, and called into activity the man

who was destined to be the sworn foe of Louis' ambition. In its rage the people stained its patriotism by the assassination of the brothers De Witt, William's opponents. The death of the great Republican, who had conjured the storm without being able to ward off its violence, proved the turning-point not only of the disasters of his country, but of the European situation. Louis, baffled by the self-sacrifice which hazarded destruction by the waves rather than surrender independence, returned to St Germain to face a European reaction on behalf of his victim. It was now evident that the preponderance of the invader of Holland meant danger to every European State in contact with France. The policy of Richelieu had, in the hands of Louis, degenerated into the policy of Philip II., and must be arrested. The emperor and the Elector of Brandenburg headed the reaction, which was supported by the Kings of Spain and Denmark, and most of the princes of the empire, while the English Parliament compelled Charles II. to detach himself from Louis and make peace. Thus the war widened into a great European struggle which lasted five years, and in which Louis was ultimately almost as isolated as the Republic had been at its commencement. Sweden alone remained true to the French alliance, and though Turenne added to his military laurels by a number of masterly campaigns before his death in July 1675, and Luxemburg laid the foundation of his future fame in the operations against William of Orange, Louis was compelled, by the menace of an Anglo-Dutch alliance, to agree to the Peace of Nymwegen (August 1678 to February 1679).[1] Instead of boasting the conquest of Holland, he renounced all claim to Dutch territory, and granted an advantageous commercial treaty to the Republic, restored part of his conquests in Belgium as compensation to Spain for Franche Comté and a number of Flemish towns which he retained, gave back Lorraine to its duke, and ratified anew the Treaty of Westphalia. He had gained in territory, and his army in reputation. Paris hailed the conqueror as "Louis the Great," and the adulation of the poets, the flattery of the courtiers distended his egoism and his vanity. It was the climax of French hero-worship; yet France, in abasing itself in this exaltation of its king, was but proclaiming its infinite servility. Worse still, in deifying an arrogant militarism, it was blind to its true interest, for this militarism had to be paid for in heavy drafts on the national

[1] There were in reality three treaties, the first between Louis and the Dutch, August 1678; the second between him and the King of Spain in September; the third between him and the emperor in February 1679. Some months elapsed before the conclusion of peace with Brandenburg.

exchequer, and an ominous blight had already fallen on the prosperity of the first part of Louis' active reign.[1]

Colbert had viewed with apprehension and sorrow the development of this policy of aggressive militarism, for which he had to furnish the means. To his remonstrances Louis significantly responded, "If you will not provide the necessary revenue, there is one man who will." That man was Louvois, and between him and Colbert there was the ill-will that springs from rivalry and incompatibility of character and policy. Like Sully, he received many substantial favours from his master, but he was equally deserving of them, and as in the case of Sully, the welfare of the nation was superior to his personal advancement. The commercial and industrial, rather than the territorial aggrandisement of France was his passion, whereas Louvois saw in the increase of prosperity merely the instrument of aggression. In this, Louis now agreed with him, and it is not surprising that Colbert observed with bitterness the growing preference for the new-comer on grounds of policy as well as of personal considerations. Instead of the former delight in his task, he now toiled at his desk with a heavy heart to co-operate in a policy in which he saw the ruin of his work. "Whilst previously he set to work rubbing his hands for zest," wrote his secretary, Charles Perrault, "he now toiled with an air of chagrin and with constant sighs." He was compelled to resort to the measures of a Fouquet, which he at first discarded with such brilliant results, in order to feed the drain on the treasury. Extraordinary expedients (*affaires extraordinaires*)—loans, sale of offices, alienation of the revenue and the royal domains, augmentation of the salt tax, and the imposition of new ones on stamped paper, tobacco, tin utensils, etc.—followed one another in quick succession.[2] Louis' extravagance in the construction, continuation, or embellishment of magnificent palaces and public buildings was almost as embarrassing as the drain of the war. Colbert shared in and, to a certain extent, encouraged his master's love of huge and expensive structures. He had a passion for the completion of the Louvre, which he regarded "as the most superb palace in the world," and grudged no outlay for this object. He summoned Bernini from

[1] For the negotiations and military operations during the period 1670-78, see Mignet, Négociations, iii. and iv., and Mémoires Militaires de Louis XIV., iii. and iv. of Œuvres; Rousset, Histoire de Louvois, i. and ii. Cf. Voltaire, Siècle de Louis XIV., 95-155; Martin, Hist. de France, xiii.; Michelet, Hist. de France, xv.

[2] See Isambert, xix. 83, 89, 114, 126, 132, 145, 150, 151, 202, 416, etc.

Italy, but when he discovered that the reputation of the Italian architect was greater than his merits, he paid a large sum to expedite his return beyond the Alps, with his clumsy plan in his pocket, and intrusted its completion to Claude Perrault.[1] On the other hand, he regretted the royal predilection for Versailles, and tried in vain to moderate the extravagant whim which revelled in this vast, heavy, and stilted edifice. For the last ten years of his administration the works of the Louvre were almost neglected for those at Versailles, and during the last five the sums expended on the construction of this monument of a pompous but clumsy taste were very heavy.[2] It was not the expense alone that excited the remonstrances of Colbert. It had neither elegance nor true dignity in his eyes, and he regretted that Louis, who had as little sense of nature as he had of economy,[3] should spend so profusely on an edifice which could only convey to posterity a poor impression of the taste, ideas, and character of his hero. "What a pity," he wrote, "that the greatest and the most virtuous king . . . should be measured by the yard of Versailles! And yet there is reason to fear this misfortune."[4] At the same time the works at Trianon, Marly, Clagny, St Germain, Fontainebleau, Vincennes, besides the embellishment of the capital, consumed many millions more. From 1664 to 1680, Colbert paid for these works, in round numbers, seventy-four million livres.[5] This represents only about half the sum expended on the same objects during the first twenty-five years of Louis' active reign. Much less indeed than has often been asserted, but sufficiently serious to excite the murmurs of the taxpayer as well as the remonstrances of the minister. Mistresses and bastards were also very costly, for Louis, who emulated his grandfather as a reformer, might with equal reason claim to be his rival in profligacy. The royal journeys, too, cost Colbert infinite solicitude. Moderation was out of the question when royalty was *en voyage*, and enjoyed itself, according to Voltaire, at the rate of 1,500 louis d'ors daily during a visit to the conquered cities of Flanders in 1690.[6] The royal alliances were still more costly, and vast sums were expended in buying the friendship of foreign princes, and bribing foreign courtiers, statesmen, prelates, mistresses

[1] Comptes des Bâtiments du Roi, publiés par Jules Guiffrey for the Documents Inédits, i., Introduction, 30, 31.

[2] Comptes des Bâtiments, i., Introduction, 40, 41.

[3] See Mémoires de St Simon, xii. 79-84.

[4] Comptes des Bâtiments, i. 30.

[5] *Ibid.*, i. 1392, 1393.

[6] Siècle de Louis XIV., 111, 112.

to strengthen the hands of Louis' ambassadors. "It is cheaper to pay a neighbour to become your friend than run the risk of having him for your enemy."[1] It might be cheaper to Louis, but it was a terrible burden to Colbert, and the peasant whom he would fain have spared. Charles II. paid for his dissipations largely with French money. Between 1671 and 1674 he cost the French peasant not less than seven millions of livres, and millions more found their way into the pockets of members of the English Parliament with as little conscience or patriotism as their king. Certainly the French peasant might have had some ground for asking why he should be fleeced to maintain the sorry King of England's mistresses and enable English members of Parliament to imitate the lax morals of his majesty, the defender of the faith. He might not unreasonably conclude that the licentiousness of his own sovereign was sufficiently burdensome, not to speak of the licentiousness of a horde of ornamental courtiers and of drunken trans-Rhenish bishops.

As the result of this composite bleeding process, Colbert had a large debt to face at the conclusion of the war in spite of increased taxation and extraordinary expedients. The revenues of 1680 and 1681 were anticipated, and the grand hopes built upon an industrial and commercial policy were found to rest on sand. The net revenue had indeed risen from thirty-two millions of livres in 1662, to eighty-seven millions in 1683, but the excess of expenditure over income had created an alarming deficit, which even Colbert's ingenuity was unable to reduce. Retrenchment was the only remedy, but retrenchment had become alien both to the policy and the habits of the monarch. Colbert struggled bravely against fate, Louis, and Louvois, and at last, on the 6th September 1683, died in the forlorn attempt, overwhelmed by anxiety and the estrangement of a master whom he had reverenced as a God on earth, and served with a devotion approaching to worship. He was fitted by nature and a narrow official training to be the servant of an absolute master. To part with place and power, because he disapproved of a measure or a policy, was a thought that never entered his mind. He went, in his capacity of minister, all the length of the dogma of absolute power, as that dogma was conceived by his age in France. He had no conception of ministerial independence, no conception of or sympathy with liberty as we understand it. His complaisance towards the sovereign is comparable to the self-abnegation of the monk, and though he can remonstrate, he cannot oppose, and puts on record the most extravagant expression of his sense of his sovereign's

[1] Mémoires Historiques, ii. 41.

greatness and power. His ideal of the State is a bureaucracy, of which he is the director under an autocratic king. Nay, he flattered that king with all the extravagance of the poetaster of the time who had a pension to deserve or to vindicate. Of the rugged, choleric manliness of Sully in his dealings with the king, there is no trace. He was doubtless sincere for the most part in all this, and Louis' power of lording it over all sorts of men must have been indeed extraordinary to command such complete abasement from a man of undoubted strength of will and no mean talent. But experience taught Colbert that such devotion was a thankless task. "If I had done for God what I have done for this man," he is reported to have bitterly said on his deathbed, "I should be saved twice over, and now I know not what shall become of me." Louis, softened at the news of his illness and sick himself, wrote some friendly lines to his son Seignelay. The dying man listened in silence to the royal missive, and could not be persuaded to send a reply. "It is to the King of kings," gasped he, "that I must make my response." The melancholy of his end was deepened by the disgraceful outburst of popular hatred, which was only prevented from violently insulting his remains by a force of guards. The Parisians remembered only the harshness of some of his expedients; they overlooked the many merits of his administration. It was the fashion to worship Louvois and curse Colbert. Louis at least knew better. "I regret a faithful minister, with whom I am fully satisfied." One misses in these perfunctory words of appreciation to his widow the touch of humanity to which his dignity only too often made him insensible. Happily for his reputation the note to Seignelay is couched in warmer terms, and besides hoping for his recovery, mentions the special friendship which he cherished for him, and his sense of his value to the State.[1]

Let us dismiss Colbert with a word on his great services to science and art. He manifested a warm interest in matters of even larger importance than the routine work of an arduous ministerial office. The accounts of the royal buildings display him as the generous patron of that which makes for intellectual as well as material progress. Richelieu had aspired to distinction as the Mæcenas of his time. Colbert emulated the master in this, as in other respects, and in so doing had no personal motive to serve. His patronage of literature, science, and art was no mere condescension, or at most an additional sop to his self-esteem. He founded academies and encouraged science and art from a deep sense of their intrinsic

[1] For an account of Colbert's last days, and the various versions of the episode of the royal letter, see Histoire de Colbert, ii., chap. 34.

worth. His patronage was not merely that of the politician anxious to increase his reputation, though the glory of the king was not lost sight of in his benefactions. His mind was not of that narrow official type which has no appreciation of anything but ledgers, business letters, and memoranda. He was not concerned merely to acquire the flimsy reputation of the *bel esprit* in addition to other more solid merits. He strove to earn for Louis the fame of an Augustus, and he did so partly at least from a deep sympathy with culture. To him rather than to Louis belongs the merit of the foundation of the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles Lettres, the Academies of the Sciences, of Architecture, of Music, of Painting (with its offshoot at Rome), and the School of Oriental Languages, besides numerous academies in the chief provincial towns,[1] while the royal library owed much to his zeal as a collector of books and manuscripts.

SOURCES OF THIS CHAPTER.—Isambert, Recueil, xviii. and xix.; Mémoires Historiques et Instructions de Louis XIV. pour le Dauphin in Œuvres de Louis XIV.; Correspondance Administrative sous le Règne de Louis XIV., edited for the Documents Inédits by G. B. Depping; Lettres, Instructions et Mémoires de Colbert, edited by Pierre Clément; Pierre Clément, Histoire de Colbert, edited by Geffroy; Chéruel, De l'Administration de Louis XIV. d'après les Mémoires Inédits d'Olivier D'Ormesson, and the Mémoires themselves edited for the Documents Inédits; Journal de Dangeau (Paris, 1817); Mémoires de Saint Simon, edited by Chéruel et Regnier; Archives Curieuses, second series, x.; Lettres de Madame de Sévigné; Voltaire, Siècle de Louis XIV.; Raynouard, Histoire du Droit Municipal; Voltaire, Histoire du Parlement; Rousset, Histoire de Louvois; Négociations relatives à la Succession d'Espagne, edited for the Documents Inédits by Mignet; Mémoires Militaires de Louis XIV., edited by Grimoard in the Œuvres; Perkins, France under the Regency; Martin, Histoire de France, xiii.; Michelet, Histoire de France, xv.; Comptes des Bâtiments du Roi, edited for the Documents Inédits by Jules Guiffrey; Mémoires du Comte de Coligny-Saligny, edited for the Société de l'Histoire de France by Monmerqué.

[1] Isambert, xviii. 27, xix. 8, 169; Comptes des Bâtiments, i. Introd. 64-71; and Histoire de Colbert, ii., chaps. 25, 26, 27, and 33. The Academy of Painting and Sculpture was founded by Mazarin in 1648, but had fallen into decay and was reorganised by Colbert.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### LOUIS XIV. AND MADAME DE MAINTENON—PERSECUTION OF THE HUGUENOTS AND REVOCATION OF THE EDICT OF NANTES (1664-1686).

A FEW weeks before the loss of Colbert, Louis was called on to regret, if not exactly to deplore, the loss of his queen. Maria Theresa had been, till within two years of her death, a complete cypher among the galaxy of beautiful women who adorned his court and made him an unfaithful husband. Before 1681 Louis' private life had been as scandalous as that of his grandfather. Mistress succeeded mistress as the amorous fancy of the monarch was captivated by some beauty more enterprising and seductive than her predecessors. Madame de la Vallière, Madame de Montespan, Mademoiselle de Fontanges, successively ruled his heart and his court for a longer or shorter period. Louis was undoubtedly a very religious, if a very immoral man, that is to say, he was strictly orthodox, went to sermon and confession, and held his bishops in due honour. Though living the life of an epicurean, he reasoned with considerable force to prove the claims of Christianity on his allegiance.[1] For the society of the day this passed very conveniently for religion, as contemporary memoirs only too conclusively prove. To accept tradition and square it with human nature was fashionable, agreeable, and reasonable. On this principle, Louis managed very well to reconcile his mistresses with his bishops, and many of his bishops, with the exception of a Bossuet, a Massillon, a Fléchier, a Bourdaloue, saw no insuperable inconsistency in the combination. It was only in 1681 that a change came over both the religious conceptions and the conduct of the monarch, and this change was largely due to the influence of a remarkable woman. That woman was Françoise D'Aubigné, afterwards so celebrated as Madame de Maintenon, who wielded a strange power over the haughtiest and most self-indulgent man in Europe, and indirectly exercised a con-

[1] Mém. Hist., i. 87-100.

siderable influence on France as well during the latter half of his reign. The decline of Colbert's influence was contemporary with, though not contingent on, the growth of that of Madame de Maintenon, and shortly after his death Madame's influence reached its climax in her secret marriage to the amorous monarch, after a few months of widowerhood, in the spring of 1684.

The career of Françoise D'Aubigné affords an extraordinary example of the strange freaks of fortune. She was born in November 1635 in a prison—the *conciergerie* of the palace of Niort at Poitiers—where her father, debauchee, vagabond, conspirator, coiner of false money, who had been condemned to death for rape in 1613, and had murdered his first wife and her paramour, was incarcerated for one of his many crimes. Her mother, Jeanne de Cardilhac, who was a woman of great firmness of character and severity of manners, abandoned her worthless spouse shortly after her birth, and lived with her two sons at Paris a life of penury, misery, and litigation with her husband's relatives. During this period Françoise remained under the affectionate care of her father's sister, Madame de Villette, who brought her up in the Protestant creed, of which her paternal ancestors had been staunch and, some of them, distinguished adherents. On his liberation from prison in 1643, D'Aubigné rejoined his reluctant spouse and compelled her to accompany him to Martinique, where he occupied a minor administrative post till his death in 1647. Several years of privation and misery followed for both mother and daughter, and the trials of Françoise were embittered by religious persecution. She clung to the Protestant teachings of Madame de Villette in spite of the harsh insistence of the Ursuline nuns of the Parisian convent, where she completed her education, to extort her abjuration. The harshness of the sisters bade fair to make an incorrigible heretic of their pupil, and it was only to the wise gentleness of one of her instructresses, seconded by the persuasive arguments of a subtle doctor, who disputed with a Huguenot minister for several days for her edification, that she at last capitulated. Her conversion was evidently the fruit of conviction, for the trials with which she had made early acquaintance had endued the pensive girl of fifteen with a seriousness far beyond her years. Everything is surprising in the life of Françoise D'Aubigné, and one of the strangest of these surprises is to find her a year later the wife of a paralytic poet and wit, Scarron by name, who fell in love with the penniless, but fascinating girl at first sight, and offered her his hand and his home two years after the death of her mother in 1650. It says a good deal for her strength of character that

Scarron became a better man for his marriage, and that the young wife maintained her purity and self-respect in spite of the libertine society which frequented his house. Many of her visitors were people of rank and fashion as well as of lax morals, and their friendship secured her an influential connection in society. It is rather a shock, however, to find the future foundress of St Cyr and reformer of Louis XIV. the friend of Ninon de Lenclos. Malicious gossip has made the most of facts like these, but there is nothing improbable, considering the elastic spirit of the time, which could make a heroine of a Ninon, and yet do homage to the Virgin, in the supposition that Madame Scarron retained both her virtue and her religious principles in such an environment. She was at all events clearly a woman of exceptional strength of character and will. While she could enjoy the homage of a numerous suite of admirers, she took care to remain mistress of herself, and her cold, self-restrained *naturelle* made the task less difficult than it would otherwise have been. She was saved by her temperament. Her passion was not love, but esteem. "I did not desire to be loved by any individual, whoever he might be; I wished to be loved by all the world, to be well spoken of, to play the *beau personnage*, and to win the approbation of honourable people. Honour was my idol."[1] "The desire to be esteemed puts me on my guard against my passions,"[2] she wrote to her confessor. She was as conscious of her virtues as anxious for the recognition of them. "I know not my sins," she complacently assured her confessor in another epistle; "I have a love of morality and an inclination to what is good which keep me from doing evil."[3] For such a nature it certainly was not very difficult or very meritorious to remain virtuous even where the current of fashion ran all the other way, and even when the death of Scarron in 1660 left her a fascinating, but penniless widow, and the temptation to be unfaithful to her idol became very strong. She might have become the mistress of one of her many suitors; she preferred poverty and a lodging in a convent, and managed to live decently on her husband's pension, which was continued to her by Anne of Austria. She nevertheless assiduously cultivated her fashionable friends, and was a welcome visitor at the hôtels of the Marshal D'Albret and the Duke of Richelieu, the rendezvous of the *beaux esprits* of the day. Her life during this period was divided between her devotions and the diversions of society. That she was a person of some importance is proved by her intimacy with Madame de

[1] Correspondance Générale de Madame de Maintenon, par Th. Lavallée, i. 86.
[2] *Ibid.*, i. 86. [3] *Ibid* ii. 96.

Montespan, the successor of Vallière as royal mistress-in-chief, and it was to this intimacy, as well as to her reputation for sanctity, that she owed her appointment as governess to Madame's illegitimate children. In this office, though somewhat compromising to a lady of such a reputation for virtue and devotion, she was in her true sphere. There is something of the schoolmistress in this self-restrained, prudent woman, who is much concerned in teaching herself the rules of a carefully measured conduct, and as much concerned in teaching others what she considers wisdom and propriety. It is not a very attractive nature at bottom, though Madame Scarron possessed and diligently practised the gift of attracting. It is incapable of largeness or generosity in its aspirations and ideals. It is too faultless by far. But it brought her the most precious thing in life—a reputation which it was her greatest anxiety to preserve and augment, and it stood her in good stead now as later. She took good care to get the royal commission for the charge. "It was necessary that the king should command me; this was a precaution which prudence inspired."[1] It was the king's children, not those of her friend, his mistress, that she undertook to rear. Such prudence would bring her the royal confidence, and this was a prize worth a good deal of self-abasement, though it could not yet have entered into the head of the royal governess to aspire to her future *rôle*. She was on the right road, at any rate. Henceforth poverty was left behind, but her charge cost her infinite worry and labour. In order to maintain the secrecy which the king exacted, she alone fetched in a cab the children of which Madame de Montespan was successively delivered. She alone directed the lonely establishment in the Rue Vaugirard, where they were reared, and after spending anxious and often sleepless nights, would appear as usual in the circle of her friends in order to disarm suspicion. It was a pretty intrigue for a woman of virtuous and even of saintly profession to carry on, but in this matter prudence was on the side of the command of the king rather than of the moral law, and for Madame Scarron, as for the society of the time, the amours of Louis were those of a sort of Jupiter, who, as things went, was an exception to the moral law. Probably there was not a grand dame in France but would have envied her her confidential position, especially as she succeeded in making a most favourable impression on Louis, and gaining his respect and regard as well as his confidence. The opportunities for deepening this impression increased after 1673, when the king legitimated Madame de Montespan's children, and Madame Scarron

[1] Cor. Gen., i. 144.

was installed as their guardian in the palace. This public position was even more compromising, for the scandal of Louis' profligacy was not lightly taken in certain quarters, notably in the circle of which Bossuet was the oracle, and to which Madame Scarron by inclination and profession belonged. In this awkward contingency prudence again came to the rescue. God has called you, urged her confessor, the Abbé Gobelin, to be the instrument of the king's conversion, and it is your duty to accept this mission. Madame Scarron listened, and became the opponent, if not yet the rival, of Madame de Montespan. The result was ceaseless contention between the two, and the growing preference of the king for the governess to the mistress.[1] It was a harassing situation, and over and over again Madame Scarron professed to her confessor her weariness of the task of either converting, or discarding Madame de Montespan, and reforming her lover. Her efforts were seconded by Bossuet and Bourdaloue, and in 1675 Louis played for a short season the part of the penitent, and gave up his mistress.[2] The fit of repentance was of short duration on both sides, and Bossuet and his partners in the work of Louis' salvation found that the tears in Madame de Montespan's bewitching eyes were too much for their prayers and exhortations. Two children were the fruit of these seductive tears. Nay, Louis rewarded himself for his abstinence by an access of libertinage which fairly nonplussed the reformers. Half-a-dozen Madames and Mademoiselles, among them Madame Ludres and Mademoiselle de Fontanges,[3] were concerned in these scandalous affairs. It was a sorry exhibition that Jupiter gave of his frailty, and the exhibition was not made less ridiculous by the short intervals of penitence and devotion which varied it. This vacillation happily ended in 1680 in the permanent triumph of the reformers. Louis became an attentive and faithful husband after twenty years of wedded life. "God," said the grateful queen, "has raised up Madame de Maintenon to regain for me the heart of the king." Her reward was the office of lady-in-waiting to the Dauphiness and the title of Marquise de Maintenon.[4] Her consideration increased by leaps and bounds. Louis spent several hours daily in her company, and the discarded beauties became proportionately desperate and rancorous. "They are enraged against me," she complained to her confessor, "and do everything in their power to damage me."[5] That her supremacy was nevertheless assured is proved by the fact that her prudence and her

[1] Cor. Gen., i. 211, 212, 219-223, 241, 247, 253, 254.
[2] Lettres de Madame de Sévigné, ii. 257; cf. iv. 117.
[3] See *ibid.*, iv. 35, 39. [4] Cor. Gen., ii. 97, 98. [5] *Ibid.*, ii. 114.

zeal were rewarded by her clandestine marriage to her royal convert within six months of the death of the queen.

Such is the story of a strange career and an enigmatic personality as unfolded by her letters. It is not the story that most historians have recounted. The historians, at all events, have made short shrift with her passion for esteem. They have depicted her to generation after generation as an unscrupulous adventuress who, while affecting a superior piety, was very accommodating in her morals, and succeeded by her address in realising her ambition to oust her rivals and win the heart of the king for herself. She was a bigot, a prude, a woman of the world, in one breath, and was, moreover, mainly responsible for the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, as well as for many of the calamities of the later part of Louis' reign. In drawing this portrait the hostile critics relied too confidently on the aspersions of St Simon and the daring fabrications of La Beaumelle. St Simon is too prejudiced a witness to be a fair judge, and La Beaumelle, the eighteenth-century editor of her letters, abridged, suppressed, falsified, and even added to her correspondence for the purpose of pleasing his readers and earning a meretricious literary glory for himself.[1] Nemesis has deservedly overtaken this unscrupulous literary knight-errant, whose forgeries have been conclusively exposed by M. Lavallée. M. Lavallée is a chivalrous champion, and runs to earth many of the lies and aspersions which have disfigured the history of his heroine. For him Madame de Maintenon was from beginning to end, if not exactly immaculate, the next thing to it. He certainly vindicates her character from the charge of gross hypocrisy to which religion was merely a means to an end. The impression one derives from her letters does not, however, always bear out the character of the essentially good woman who always acts a noble part, which he claims for her. She was undoubtedly superior to the conventional woman of her time, as reflected in the court of Louis XIV. She was very devout in the Catholic sense, and a very zealous promoter of charitable and educational schemes, as her foundations at Ruelle and St Cyr testify. Despite her spirituality and her philanthropy she could be mundane enough. Her relations with Louis and his mistress, antecedent to Bossuet's reform scheme, are hard to reconcile with a high spiritual and moral

[1] La Beaumelle first published in 1752 a selection of her letters, which he obtained from Louis Racine, son of the poet. It was followed in 1755 by the "Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de Madame de Maintenon," and by another batch of letters in eight tomes, which he extracted partly from the archives of St Cyr. Many of them are fabricated or "cooked."

tone, and it is difficult not to see in her efforts to deliver Louis from Madame de Montespan a certain element of egoism. It was doubtless a good work, but it had its advantages for Madame de Maintenon, by which she did not subsequently fail to profit. Her devotion to the things of the spirit did not prevent her from pushing her way in the world with other arts than those of the devotee. Many of her letters, too many, are concerned with money matters. She is found pestering Colbert for a share of perquisites for her lazy, libertine brother, for whom she obtained, among other substantial favours, an annuity of 18,000 livres from a farmer-general, who secured a farm of the taxes through her influence. Nor was her intellect of a high order. Books of devotion and the routine of ecclesiastical observance occupy her mind, very largely, outside the intrigues of the court, and the directions of the Abbé Gobelin, who seems to have been an austere, but a small-minded theologian, constitute for her the sum and substance of truth. With men of large views and large culture she was not fitted to sympathise. A woman who has always her prayer-book at hand and is always in search of a lost soul, while unconscious of sin herself, is, in truth, not the most agreeable or sympathetic of personalities. Her attitude towards her former co-religionists especially displays the narrowness of her mind. She was not the implacable persecutor that her traducers have represented her to be. In 1672 we find her condemning harsh measures towards the Protestants. "I recommend to you the Catholics," she wrote to her brother, then engaged in the campaign in Holland, "and I beg you not to be inhuman towards the Protestants. It is necessary to draw these people by gentleness. Jesus Christ has shown us an example."[1] But Madame Scarron writing a private letter to her brother in 1672 was a different person from Madame de Maintenon, the reformer and spiritual directress of Louis XIV. in 1681. Zeal and policy alike led her to countenance more active measures after the tide began to set strongly at court in favour of intolerance. Her letters tell of new anxieties for the conversion of the heretics, now that the royal mind was strongly bent on ecclesiastical uniformity. "If God conserve the king," wrote she to her cousin, M. de Villette, in April 1681, "there will not be a single Huguenot in the kingdom in twenty years."[2] That she counselled the cruel measures adopted in 1681 and 1685 to coerce the heretics is not apparent from her correspondence; that she was a zealous proselytiser and favoured a certain amount of coercion is only too apparent. "There is no other expedient but violence,"[3] she assured

[1] Cor. Gen., ii. 67. [2] *Ibid.*, ii. 163. [3] *Ibid.*, ii. 140.

her brother, in reference to her intrigues to convert the Huguenot members of her family, and, while she was not the authoress of the dragonnades, her zeal led her to adopt some very questionable tactics to secure her ends. She seized the children of her Protestant cousin, the Marquis de Villette, who was sent on a cruise with his squadron, placed them in a convent, refused to give them up to their angry father, and defended both the ruse and the violence with the most casuistic ingenuity.[1] In her readiness to practise deception and use force for the salvation of a soul, Madame de Maintenon was as worldly-wise and as plausible a casuist as the most zealous opportunist of the day. Nay, her prudence even stooped to calculate the practical advantages of the work of conversion, as when she gave her brother timely notice of the sale of Huguenots' properties in Poitou, which persecution had forced their owners to abandon, in order that he might pick up a cheap estate.[2] The brother to whom this hint was given was evidently of the same practical turn of mind. "Take my advice," wrote he to his cousin the marquis, "and think of your conversion; you will be better off both in this world and the next."[3]

The conversion of Louis, for which Madame de Maintenon deserves so large a share of credit, undoubtedly improved his morals. It made him, too, a good Catholic, though it cannot be said to have made him a true Christian. He did not become less arrogant or more charitable, and it drew him ever further into that fatal policy of persecution to which his arbitrary and autocratic temperament predisposed him. The Huguenots, at least, had no reason to rejoice over that work of grace of which Bossuet and Madame de Maintenon were the chief instruments. It proved to be their undoing, for it intensified the determination to uproot heresy, and nullified the resolve to be faithful to his engagements to them with which he had begun his reign, and from which he had gradually veered away. From the outset his attitude towards them, though not aggressive, cannot be described as indulgent, and certainly was not sympathetic. They gave him no cause for anxiety on political grounds. Though bad Christians from the orthodox standpoint, they were good citizens and excellent subjects, industrious, law-abiding, and God-fearing. Their creed was no longer a menace to the tranquillity of the State. In the "Correspondance Administrative" there is only one instance of culpable intrigue laid to the charge of a member of the Reformed Church, the Sieur de Roux, who was convicted of conspiracy against

[1] See Mémoires du Marquis de Villette, edited for the Société de l'Histoire de France by Monmerqué, Introd., 13-23.

[2] Cor. Gen., ii. 202.

[3] *Ibid.*, ii. 207, 208.

the king and broken on the wheel in 1669.[1] The testimony of Louis himself, as well as of Mazarin, to their unimpeachable character as subjects and citizens is incontestable. There was no excuse for persecution apart from the unenlightened dogmatism that was assumed to be the true mark of orthodox fervour. The vast majority of French Catholics understood religious liberty just as imperfectly as the vast majority of Protestants in lands where Protestantism was supreme. The plan of a reunion of both creeds by way of accommodation was urged by Marshal Turenne, and overtures were made for this purpose by the more conciliatory spirits.[2] The scheme was as visionary as all such irenical schemes since the Reformation. There was, in fact, too much reason, on the part of the Protestants, for distrust of the motives of the government, and the menace of persecution, as the penalty of non-compliance, was not fitted to disarm their suspicions, or to commend a policy which assumed that most of the sacrifices were to be made by the Protestants and most of the advantages reaped by their opponents. Moreover, the zealots, while eager to lure the Protestants into their net, were loud in their demand for forcible repression as a thing acceptable to God and obligatory on all faithful Catholics. The blatant intolerance of the clergy scared away even the most peaceably inclined of the Protestants. In their quinquennial assemblies in 1660, 1665, 1670, 1675, 1680, these zealots reiterated the demand for persecution with growing vehemence. The harangues of their orators breathe a spirit of fierce intolerance. They proclaim war to the knife against "the monster of heresy," "the synagogues of Satan," "the representatives of the Scythians and the barbarians."[3] Unpitying severity was apparently the mark of true religion, and one is tempted to believe that these irate theologians only read the Bible in order to learn how to curse their adversaries. They were passed masters in the art of low vituperation at all events, though they had still to graduate in the school of Christian charity, not to speak of that of decent language.

Though Louis did not love a heretic, he only gradually gave way to this bigoted outcry. "Those who wish to employ violent remedies do not know the nature of this evil. . . . I believed that the best means to convert the Huguenots was not to press them by new rigour, and to observe the rights which they had obtained from my

[1] Cor. Admin., iv. 311-318.

[2] Benoît, Histoire de l'Édit de Nantes (Delft, 1693-95), iv. 136-146.

[3] *Ibid.*, iv. 36-39. The reader should peruse the bloodthirsty harangue of the Bishop of Uzes, delivered in 1665. It is only a sample of many.

predecessors."[1] "I am bound by my royal word," he protested to the Elector of Brandenburg, who, in 1665, complained of the harsh treatment of the French Protestants by the clergy and the agents of the government, "and by gratitude for the proofs of their fidelity during the recent troubles, when they rendered me valuable services in opposing by arms the evil designs of a rebellious party against my authority."[2] The Protestants had no good reason to be grateful for these professions of his indebtedness to their fidelity, or of his respect for treaty rights which both expediency and honour should have rendered inviolable. They had discovered what it meant to be the subjects of an autocratic king, to whom dissent was an offence on both personal and religious grounds. From the first, Louis showed his gratitude by interpreting his obligations as narrowly as he could, and by using all his influence to discredit "the pretended reformed religion." He gave his patronage to the work of proselytism, and the "Correspondance Administrative" shows us bishops, intendants, and agents busy at an early period with the work of conversion under the auspices of the monarch and his minister of the interior,[3] though the methods employed are limited to diplomacy. He was careful to fill vacant sees with men of exemplary life, in order if possible to effect his purpose by moral influence.[4] He had the satisfaction of securing at least some notable conversions. The abjuration of Marshal Turenne, who capitulated to the eloquence of Bossuet, was a great triumph.[5] Legislation helped these government missionaries, and unfortunately this legislation indicates a progressive policy of repression which was to culminate in twenty-five years in the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, and throws an instructive light on the value of Louis' profession of respect for the rights of heretics. It is certain that he had formed the design of extirpating heresy as early as the year 1664,[6] and blow after blow was dealt at the legal

[1] Méms. Hist., i. 84-86.

[2] Benoît, Histoire de l'Édit de Nantes, iv. 12, who adds that Louis was actuated by political motives in making these professions to the Elector, and that they were not sincere.

[3] Corresp. Admin., iv. 303, 310; cf. Conduite de la Cour de France (1665) in Archives Curieuses, x. (2te. Série), 11; 12.

[4] Méms. Hist., i. 84-89.

[5] Benoît, iv. 129, 130.

[6] In December of that year Gremonville, ambassador at Vienna, assured the emperor's confessor that his master was determined to uproot heresy, and that, if God continued to prosper his reign, it would be extinguished in a few years. Louvois, writing a year later to the Marquis de Pradel in Holland, significantly remarked that the suppression of Protestantism was the secret policy of the king, though he did not desire to use violence from motives of policy. See Histoire de Louvois, iii. 434.

rights of the Protestants, in the form of a long series of persecuting enactments, until nothing was wanting but the formal disavowal of the edict itself.

I cannot follow this intricate legislation in detail. It is sufficient to mark its main features. During the first fifteen years of his active reign Louis was evidently feeling his way with some measure of precaution towards his ultimate goal. His policy was to strengthen the hands of the zealots by seductive or harassing measures, without appearing to break faith with the heretics. It was a policy which did credit to his Jesuit mentors, if not to the laws of honour and morality. Witness the decree of 11th January *1663*, which discharged converts to Catholicism from the obligation to pay their debts to their former co-religionists,[1] and the regulation which exempted a converted minister from payment of taxes and the burden of billeting soldiers.[2] On the other hand severe penalties were denounced against those who should renounce Catholicism for Protestantism.[3] The Protestant ministers were forbidden to preach in any place not included in the terms of the Edict of Nantes,[4] and the richer churches to support the poorer.[5] To facilitate the work of conversion, the curé was empowered to visit dying Huguenots in order to ascertain whether they wished to be converted, and to offer them instruction and consolation.[6] The great object of these missionaries was to get hold of the children, and the government did not scruple to patronise the nefarious tactics of the priests by declaring boys of fourteen and girls of twelve capable of choosing their creed, and compelling their parents to contribute to their maintenance in the convents.[7] The abuse of this nefarious expedient is evidenced by a declaration of February 1669, which prohibited the abduction of young children from their homes and ordered their restoration to their parents.[8] On the other hand all Protestant schools in places which did not come within the scope of the Edict of Nantes were ordered to be closed, and instruction in those allowed to subsist was limited to reading, writing, and arithmetic.[9] The aim of this device was to drive Protestant children to Catholic schools, and the same motive dictated the suppression of the academies for the education of the sons of Protestant noblemen. The savage edict against blasphemers was an additional mesh in the

[1] Isambert, xviii. 22.
[2] *Ibid.*, xviii. 83 (April 1666).
[3] *Ibid.*, xviii. 24, 25.
[4] *Ibid.*, xviii. 77; cf. 200.
[5] Benoît, Histoire, iv. 32.
[6] Isambert, xviii. 55; cf. 84, and Benoît, iv. 22.
[7] *Ibid.*, xviii. 64, 65 (24th October 1665).
[8] *Ibid.*, xviii. 204.
[9] *Ibid.*, xviii. 83, 84 (April 1666).

net of the priest, for it was not difficult to involve in this crime a person who disbelieved in the crass superstition which enveloped the memory of the Virgin. To doubt the immaculate conception was blasphemy, to express impatience with the crudities of imbecile monks, was to run the risk of being torn to pieces on the spot by a fanatic mob, or, at the very least, atone for such temerity by a heavy fine.[1]

Others of these enactments seem petty enough to us, though they were serious enough to those whose religion was supposed to be a sufficient reason for making it difficult to earn their daily bread, or for robbing them of the esteem of their neighbours. They display a set policy of wasp-stings, which, taken in the lump, must have been very galling. If the Huguenots will not be converted they shall be made miserable, shall feel in their pockets as well as in their hearts the social stigma attached to heresy. Obstacles were accordingly placed in the way of the admission of Protestants into the trade guilds on the score of their religion.[2] The women clothes dealers of Paris, for instance, concluded that to deal in clothes was too honourable a profession for a heretic, and refused to admit Protestant women. Their self-respecting decision had the honour of being ratified by the Parliament and confirmed by the Council of State.[3] In the enforcement of the edicts for the suppression of offices it was the Protestants rather than the Catholics that were made to suffer most.[4] However industrious and loyal the Huguenots might be, it was a horrible presumption in the heretics to set up the royal or municipal arms in their churches and to have special benches for the magistrates and councillors, and thus presume equality as citizens and subjects with respectable Catholics in such matters.[5] Their ministers might not console or exhort prisoners except in a whisper, and in a chamber set apart for such contaminating conversations.[6] They might not appear in gown or cassock, or wear a long coat outside their temples, in order that the priest might have a monopoly of dignified official garments. The bodies of Protestants might on no pretext be interred in Catholic cemeteries, seeing that death was a respecter of creeds and persons in those days, and Protestant funerals might only take place in furtive fashion at sunrise and sunset, a Protestant being, in orthodox eyes, clearly no better than a criminal and a social pariah. They might not sing their psalms in their temples whilst a Catholic procession was passing outside. They

[1] See Benoît, iv. 23, 24.
[2] *Ibid.*, iv. 153-155.
[3] Isambert, xviii. 59 (August 1665).
[4] *Ibid.*, iv. 25.
[5] See *Ibid.*, xviii. 195 (February 1672).
[6] *Ibid.*, xviii. 78 (April 1666).

must withdraw or uncover before the host in the street, and observe the feast days of the Church.[1]

The Protestants had not merely to complain of a spiteful policy of pin-pricks on the part of the government, they had to submit to the malicious violence of the mob. Here is a sample of the amenities of religious controversy which commended themselves to the piety of their Catholic fellow-citizens. It is taken from an edict of the Council of State in condemnation of such outrageous conduct, and is therefore unimpeachable. At Grenoble the mob battered in the doors of the Protestant temple, burned the Bible, and committed "various indignities." At Aoust in Dauphiné the Catholics broke the doors and benches of the local meeting-house, tore the pulpit cloth, the Bible, the registers, and the Psalm-books, and threw them into the river, levelled part of the walls, and threatened any one who dared to interfere with the work of destruction with violence. At Houdan they set fire to the temple and spilt the water brought to extinguish the flames. Similar outrages were perpetrated at Saintes, La Ferté, Vendôme, and many places in Poitou.[2]

Shortly before the Peace of Nymwegen, Louis seems, to judge from the persecuting edicts that begin to crowd the statute-book, to have cast aside moderation and reserve, and to have set himself, with an unflinching fixity of purpose, to the task of suppressing heresy. The Treaty of Nymwegen signed, a religious war began in which he strove only too successfully to earn the glory of the conqueror of his heretic subjects, and during which he acted, only too literally, on the principle that everything is fair in war. The persecution which resulted from this departure is a dark blot on his reputation, and was fraught with most disastrous consequences. It would be inexplicable how he could have acted so misguided and ruinous a part, did we not remember that his will was his idol, and that the age on which he stamped his autocratic personality, despite its vaunted glory as the apotheosis of a refined civilisation, was the age of blind intolerance and crass obscurantism. Two currents contributed to the torrent that swept away the Edict of Nantes. One sprang from the autocratic instincts of the monarch, whom vanity and egotism had intoxicated with the sense of infallibility, and flattery had taught to believe in his own omnipotence. To such a nature dissent from the religion of the king was an offence to the royal majesty. Schism was not merely a sin, it was a crime. It was most galling to a man who, while he might beard the Pope, was

[1] See the long edict of April 1666, Isambert, xviii. 76-85.

[2] Isambert, xix. 268 (May 1681).

hindered by an obnoxious edict from lording it over the conscience of the humblest of his own subjects. To conquer the heretic was to complete his supremacy, to fill up the measure of his invincibility. The heretic must, therefore, be conquered. The other current sprang from the bigotry of the age. Louis was indifferent enough to be a rake; he was not sufficiently indifferent or wise to be a latitudinarian. Should he turn over a new leaf, the fruit of his regeneration would most likely be an access of persecution. The zealots took good care to improve their opportunity, and they were fortunate in having in Louis' ministers men who were ready to carry out the royal will in this as in other matters. Le Tellier, the chancellor, was nothing if not devout, and was only too eager to exercise his legal ingenuity in the multiplication of persecuting edicts. Chateauneuf, secretary of State for the affairs of "the pretended reformed religion," was a narrow-minded zealot, ready to make himself the puppet of the bishops and the chancellor. Colbert was not the man to stand in the breach, especially as the sun of the royal favour was beginning to decline, and argument was dangerous. In this matter he suited himself to circumstances, though he would fain have resisted an intolerant policy as hurtful to the material interests of France.[1] He protected the Calvinists as long as he could safely do so, especially those of foreign birth, whom, from economic reasons, he invited to settle in France. When Louis became a confirmed bigot, he had no alternative but submission or resignation, for his influence was waning, and others besides him had obtained the direction of the royal mind. He took to the work with reluctance, but his directions to the intendants and the missionaries are those of the faithful servant of the king in this, as in other matters of administration.[2] Sully would have acted a different part, but in fearless independence of judgment Colbert was no Sully. It was in Louvois, however, that the zealots found a man after their heart, Louvois,—the director of the dragonnades, the man of violent temperament and forcible expedients, the man who, in Montesquieu's opinion, was one of the two worst citizens ever produced by France. He was no religious fanatic, but he was a fanatic believer in submission to authority. Conscience was an enigma to the man, who saw in Protestantism only "the religion which is displeasing to the king," and to whom the only argument was that of force, the only effective missionary the dragoon. While Le Tellier, Père le Chaise, Bossuet, Madame de Maintenon, intrigue and pray to reduce the heretics, Louvois sets the dragoons in motion,

[1] Benoît, iv. 410, 411.

[2] See Histoire de Colbert, ii. 398-409.

and in less than a year the dragoons drive them like a flock of sheep into the fold of St Peter.

The story of the persecution preliminary to the revocation of the Edict of Nantes is a wretched chapter in the history of religious aberration. It is a mean, disgusting, revolting business, whose baseness is relieved only by the heroism, the spiritual and moral exaltation of the men and women who placed allegiance to conscience higher than obedience to the king. It is difficult to realise the moral and mental condition of those who sacrificed to so appalling a degree the principles of common morality to bigotry or policy. Corruption, brutality, sophistry, chicanery, are pressed into the service of the Lord. To save a soul men resort to the tricks of the swindler, the arts of the rough, the expedients of the pressgang. And the most melancholy feature of the business is that they prate all the time of religion and morality, and even of charity. They bribe, they kidnap, they hale the heretics to communion and confession, they torment the sick and dying with their theological gibberish, they drive multitudes into banishment on the pretext of reclaiming the Protestants to a knowledge of true religion. It is true that Louis was ignorant of some of the worst excesses perpetrated by his agents in the provinces, but he could not have been ignorant of the edicts that flagrantly outraged justice and morality, and are an everlasting infamy to those concerned in their promulgation and execution. What are we to think of a king who placed a premium on proselytism; of a chancellor who drew up edict after edict that tempted men to abjure by exempting them from taxation, or punished their conscientious scruples by increasing their contribution to the revenue; of bishops who bought false conversions wholesale by the money set apart for the purpose; of ministers who exhorted the intendants to resort to the tricks of the cheat, the expedient of the highway robber; of judges to whom the heretic was, *ipso facto*, a rogue and a criminal? Is it possible to excuse them by saying that the moral standard of one age is different from that of another? It is a poor excuse that would assume men to be ignorant, three centuries ago, of the elements of morality, of honest and honourable conduct. Louis XIV. and his officials and bishops were doubtless men of honour, but, in this matter, it is the honour that holds among sharpers and roughs. This is a strong assertion; it is unfortunately borne out by so impartial an authority as the statute-book, not to mention the grim collection of facts contained in the industrious *tomes* of the refugee Benoît.

Here are some samples of the persecuting legislation of the years

immediately preceding 1685 that disgraces the name of Louis XIV. The crime of relapse was now punished by perpetual deportation.[1] The marriages of Catholics and Protestants were declared illegal and their offspring illegitimate.[2] The age at which Protestant children were capable of conversion was reduced to seven years,[3] and the declaration of February 1669, which prohibited abduction, was annulled in 1681, in deference to the clamour of the bigots. This outrageous law carried desolation into the homes of the Huguenots. To the misery of persecution was added the anxiety of saving their offspring from the wiles of the priest, who found willing helpers in Catholic servants and neighbours. It was enough that a child cried, because it was not allowed to witness a Catholic procession, to furnish proof of the inspiration of the Holy Ghost and ensure its abduction and conversion, and Louis was as impervious to the agonised cry of bereaved fathers and mothers as the judges were to their complaints of violent tactics.[4] Priests, magistrates, and even churchwardens might enter the houses of dying heretics, not merely to ascertain whether they were willing to die in the Catholic faith, but to pester them with solicitations, and to wrangle with their afflicted relations over the salvation of their souls.[5] Their religious services were subjected to a system of espionage in order to obtain some pretext for silencing their preachers and breaking up their congregations. The suppression of the Protestant colleges at Sedan, Saumur, Montauban, Chatillon, Die, the demolition of many of their temples, the prohibition of their synods, the suppression of the *chambres miparties*, were so many steps in the policy of disintegration[6] which should rob them of their ecclesiastical organisation and their legal rights, and facilitate their total ruin. It sounds like sarcasm to find Louis nevertheless exhorting the archbishops and bishops in a circular-letter, of date July 1682, to do nothing against the edicts and declarations which ensured the Protestants toleration, and exhorting them to use reason and charity in the work of conversion.[7] Among these expedients of reason and charity Louis evidently included the most unblushing corruption. Many of the Protestant nobility were won over by pensions and orders. Most of the descendants of Coligny and other leaders of the civil wars were by this time devout Catholics, and though there were honourable exceptions, the majority

[1] Isambert, xix. 184-187 (March 1679).
[2] *Ibid.*, xix. 257, 258 (Nov. 1680).
[3] *Ibid.*, xix. 270 (June 1681).
[4] See Benoît, iv. 445-461.
[5] Isambert, xix. 272 (June 1681).
[6] See Isambert, xix. 274, 393, etc., and Benoît, iv. 378, 379.
[7] Isambert, xix. 393.

of the Protestant nobility hastened to free themselves from the stigma of not being of the king's religion. To buy the abjuration of the poor, he placed in 1676 a sum of money, derived from the ecclesiastical revenue of the Crown, at the disposal of Pellison, a convert from Protestantism. Pellison not only burned with the zeal of a convert, he was economic. Conversions must not only be numerous, he warned the bishops, they must be cheap.[1] Needless to say, the bishops did a brisk business in this traffic in souls. Where the rhetoric of a Bossuet had failed, the golden eloquence of Pellison succeeded beyond expectation, and large numbers were reported by the bishops and the missionaries to have found salvation at the rate of six francs a head. Louis was gladdened at the sight of the long lists of conversions, accompanied by indorsed receipts, sent up from the provinces. He did not pause to inquire whether this prosperous work of grace did not merely make impostors of many Catholics who professed allegiance to Calvin in order to gain a few francs for renouncing it, or at best transformed indigent Huguenots into nominal converts. The frequent and savage edicts against relapse testify that these mercenary proselytes were not the most reliable of adherents. This expedient had not even the merit of effectively separating the chaff from the wheat in the Huguenot barn, though it doubtless reduced their numbers somewhat, and this was the main thing from the orthodox point of view. That the mass of the heretics resisted this base means of reduction is patent from the large number of edicts which were intended to coerce their stubbornness by depriving them of the means of subsistence. What payment could not effect, penalties might achieve. Protestantism was made a disqualification for employment. Orthodoxy became the test of proficiency. No Protestant could hold a public position even of the humblest grade. He could not be a gardener, a carpenter, a caretaker, a clerk of revenue.[2] He could not be a recorder, a notary, a procurator, an apothecary, a grocer, a printer.[3] He could not graduate doctor of laws, or be received as an advocate, or practise as a physician.[4] If he should emigrate in order to earn his bread in peace, informers of his flight were entitled to half his property.[5] Protestant women could not act as midwives[6] in order that moribund infants might be sprinkled with holy water and thus escape damnation.

Despite this policy of starvation, the Huguenot conscience re-

[1] See Benoît, iv. 350-353.
[2] See Corresp. Admin., iv. 321, 24, 26, 40.
[3] Isambert, xix. 258, 273, 390, 480, 516, etc.
[4] *Ibid.*, xix. 488, 520, 523, etc. [5] *Ibid.*, xix. 524. [6] *Ibid.*, xix. 231.

mained refractory. More drastic measures must, therefore, be taken. Why not, for instance, billet soldiers on these stubborn heretics, until they foreswore their Calvinistic creed, while exempting converts from this imposition.[1] The suggestion emanated from Louvois,[2] and it received its practical application at the hands of Marillac, intendant of Poitou, who quartered a regiment of dragoons on the Protestant families of this district, where their churches were most numerous, in 1681.[3] The license of the soldiers wrung a cry of horror from their victims, and the cry was carried to England, Holland, and Germany by the fugitives, who preferred exile to outrage. The scandal reached the ears of Louis, and the dragoons were moved to another district, and Marillac recalled. The respite was only temporary, however. The Protestants of Languedoc, Dauphiné, Vivarais, the Cevennes, mistook this politic act for clemency, and presumed to resume their interdicted meetings, and even, in some places, to defy the orders of the intendant by arms. They were speedily undeceived. Resistance was punished with massacre in Dauphiné and the Vivarais. The dragonnades recommenced, not in a solitary province, but all over the south of France, on the pretext of the suppression of rebellion, as if rebellion could be laid to the charge of men who presumed to worship God as conscience dictated, and had scrupulously eschewed political intrigue and disturbance for half a century. Under the direction of Louvois, and with such agents as Foucault, the intendant of Bearn, and the Marquis de Boufflers, commander of an army corps in the south, this savage crusade had at least the merit of success. The conversions *en masse*, which the terror of these hordes of brutal missionaries operated throughout the summer and autumn of 1685, were so sudden that nothing but a miracle could explain them. The miracle appears in a very different light when we read the tales of the brutal deeds of these booted and spurred servants of the Church. They lived on the best, and wasted what they did not consume. When they did not obtain what they wanted, they sold, broke, or burned the furniture. They got drunk, blasphemed, sung lewd songs far into the night. They cracked foul jests with the mistress of the house and her daughters. They seized them by the hair and dragged them in the mud, or over the causeway. They beat mothers with infants at the breast. They abused wives in the presence of their husbands. They violated mothers as well as girls. They scorched the feet of obstinate heretics over the fire till they recanted, or made known where the family savings were kept. They tied the

[1] Isambert, xix. 266 (April 1681).

[2] Histoire de Louvois, iii. 445.

[3] Benoît, iv. 10.

crucifix to the muzzles of their muskets, and when the refractory heretic refused to kiss it they poked it into his face or his chest. They drove the peasants to the church with their own goads. They deliberately kept their hosts from sleep by the noise of their saturnalia for nights on end until they abjured from sheer exhaustion, or went raving mad.[1] No wonder that the woods were haunted by distracted creatures, half mad with terror and misery, and flight beyond the sea to England or Holland became the resort of thousands more. No wonder, too, that to people to whom the coming of the dragoons was like the coming of the Huns, panic produced conversions by tens of thousands.[2] The Protestant inhabitants of Pau, for instance, resolved in public assembly to renounce their creed in a body, and in three months the Huguenots in the province of Bearn were reduced from 22,000 to a few hundreds. In three weeks there were 60,000 conversions in the generality of Bordeaux, 20,000 in that of Montauban. The mere threat of a visit from the dragoons sufficed to secure the abjuration of whole villages and towns. Three-fourths of the Protestant inhabitants of Dauphiné, and a large proportion of those of Languedoc, profited by these "good examples," and declared themselves Catholics. Those of Orange were converted in a single morning, boasted Count Tessé. "The President of the Parliament," added he, "would have turned Mahometan, along with his Protestant fellow-members, had I desired it." The strength of the clergy was taxed to the utmost to receive the multitudes into the true fold, and the cry was for more priests and additional churches.[3] It mattered not that in the vast majority of cases the ceremony of abjuration, sanctified though it was by the reception of the communion, was a solemn mockery and an act of sacrilege. To these zealots the entrance to the kingdom of God was not through the needle's eye of conviction, but through the wide door of profession. To sign a short confession of faith, or even to cry "Ave Maria," was sufficient to obtain a certificate of exemption from the terrible billet, and of orthodoxy as well.

In the success of the dragoons Louis saw the hand of God, and in spite of the plain speaking of the Marquis de Ruvigny, the repre-

[1] For an account of these sickening outrages see Benoît, iv. 474-484, and v. 829-862.

[2] Cosnac, Bishop of Valence, and an ardent persecutor, confesses that the fear of the dragoons was the best adjunct of his work (Mémoires de D. de Cosnac, Société de l'Histoire de France, ii. 115; cf. Lettres de Mad. de Sévigné, v. 4).

[3] For an account of the progress of the dragonnades see the official correspondence in Histoire de Louvois, iii. chap. 7.

sentative of the Protestants at Versailles, who warned him of the hollowness of these conversions *en masse*, and of the deplorable effects, material as well as moral, to be apprehended from this blind policy of coercion, he determined to complete the crusade by the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. He consulted a special Council of Conscience, consisting of two theologians and two jurists, who assured him that he was entitled to revoke the edict, and that what he might legally do, he ought to do, in the interest both of religion and the welfare of the people. When the question was brought before the Council of State, the Dauphin objected that revocation might drive the Huguenots to take up arms in defence of their legal rights, or at least goad many of them into exile, to the detriment of commerce and agriculture, and the consequent enfeeblement of the State. Louis replied that he had foreseen every contingency, and although he was averse to shedding a drop of the blood of his subjects, he would not hesitate to employ his armies against the rebels, and that measures of prudence were of small account compared with the advantages which would restore to religion its splendour, to the State tranquillity, and to authority its due rights. The result of the deliberation was, of course, a unanimous decision in favour of revocation.[1] Accordingly, on the 17th October 1685, Louis signed the edict which revoked those of Nantes and Nismes and all subsequent edicts, declarations, and decrees in favour of the Huguenots, prohibited the Protestants from assembling for worship in churches or in private dwellings, ordered the remaining temples to be forthwith destroyed, and the ministers to abjure or leave the kingdom within fifteen days, guaranteed pensions and exemption from taxation to those who complied, closed all Protestant schools, and directed the baptism of all Protestant children by the parish priest on pain of heavy fines for disobedience, granted a respite of four months to all refugees to return, with restoration of goods in case of compliance, confiscation in case of refusal, and condemned all fugitives to the galleys, in the case of men, and confiscation of life and goods, in the case of women. The last clause granted the right of domicile to those who should remain obdurate, on condition that they refrained from assembling for worship.[2]

"God alone has worked this miracle," cried Bossuet in the funeral oration which he preached on the chancellor, Le Tellier, who lived long enough to earn the glory of signing the edict,

[1] See the memoir written by the Duke of Burgundy in 1700, Correspondance Générale de Madame de Maintenon, ii. 379, 380.

[2] Isambert, xix. 530-534.

and to sing the Nunc Dimittis in triumph. The courtly preacher took care to divide the honour of the miracle between Louis and the Almighty. "Let us celebrate the piety of Louis," exclaimed the orator, "let us raise our acclamations to heaven, and say to this new Constantine, this new Charlemagne, 'You have exterminated the heretics; it is a work worthy of your reign—a work which confers on it its proper character.'" The poets vied with the preachers in their ecstatic flights, and defied history to produce so great and splendid an achievement. Academies, universities, and municipalities swelled the chorus of laudation, and all the glory that the French language was capable of expressing in prose and poetry was heaped on the hero of the hour. When prose and poetry failed, statues and medals gave expression to the hero-worship of an idiotic generation of bigots and sycophants. The hero himself saw no exaggeration in the most extravagant apostrophes of preachers, poets, and courtiers, for he really believed that, in signing this fatal edict, he was performing the crowning act of his reign. Henceforth he was Louis the ever victorious, the defender of the majesty of the Church and of kings; in short, the greatest of the great. So ran the pompous inscription on a bronze statue erected in honour of the author of this superlative deed. Little recked he that that statue would be cast into cannon a hundred and eight years hence, by men who would overturn thrones, as well as melt statues, and throw the bones of their kings into the ditch. Even immaculate despots are but poor, blind mortals, who forget sometimes that time is an unaccountable judge whom they cannot command or bribe, and that they are not in all things the measure of the future. That it would be an infamy to be the object of such revolting flatteries was an unthinkable contingency to that arrogant, self-satisfied mind. Louis' self-esteem was greatest at that moment. There he stands, on one of the many medals struck in his honour, in all the pride of arrogance, his left foot placed on a globe and Heresy lying crushed beneath, the Church crowning him the while with a crown that should never fade away. It was an illusory, as well as a dearly bought victory for France, present and future. Ecclesiastical uniformity, achieved by brutal methods, proved both a failure and a disaster. It was written in the statute-book; it was not written in the hearts of the Protestants. It did not even signify formal unity, for, in spite of abjuration and expatriation, Protestantism was only stunned, not killed. The Protestants, thanks to their indomitable "pastors of the desert," remained in their thousands to protest their right to liberty of conscience and worship, and the strife of creed recommenced, in

defiance of Louis the ever victorious. It served as the source of an irrepressible spirit of freedom in the presence of an autocratic *régime*, which was to contribute its quota of force to the undoing of political, as well as religious despotism in the future. Persecution now, as a hundred years before, stirred in the Huguenot heart the same sentiment of resistance to arbitrary power, that persecution stirred in the heart of the Scottish Covenanter. The Camisard, like the Covenanter, threw passive obedience to the winds, and turned at last on his oppressors, musket and pike in hand. The political effects of this stern spirit of self-assertion were greater in Scotland than in France, but though the Camisard failed to vindicate liberty of conscience and overturn the throne, he helped at least to keep alive in France the tradition of resistance to tyranny, and to hand it on to the future.

Still more ominous was the policy of brutal coercion for the Catholic Church. The hypocrisy and the sacrilege which the clergy mistook for religion, generated scepticism. The age of Voltaire dates from the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. The bigotry that had recourse to immoral expedients is largely responsible for the rebound from a debasing religiosity to the sceptical satire that cut into its very vitals. "Your triumphs," said Bayle, "are those of deism." "Ecrasez l'infame" will be the answer to the dragonnades and the casuistry that saw miracles in rascality and blasphemy.

The material were as disastrous as the moral effects. Industry and agriculture suffered from the oppression of the Huguenots, though part of the decline was doubtless due to a bad economic system, and the blighting effect of Louis' militarism. In 1689, Vauban presented a memoir to Louvois, in which he asked for the recall of the expatriated Huguenots, the restoration of the Edict of Nantes, and a general amnesty. He urged in favour of the conciliatory policy the following significant facts. Between 80,000 and 100,000 heretics had fled the kingdom, carrying with them 30,000,000 livres. These fugitives had, besides, robbed France of their skill and their industry, and proportionately enriched the countries of their adoption. French manufactures and commerce were threatened with ruin. The Dutch and English navies had gained from 8,000 to 9,000 of the best sailors of France, and their armies from 500 to 600 officers, and from 10,000 to 12,000 of the finest veterans in the world.[1] If these facts do not substantiate the exaggerated statements of the material decline attributed to this cause by writers who have overlooked other factors in the economic situation, they are

[1] See Histoire de Louvois, iii. 507.

sufficiently serious to condemn the fatuous policy which sacrificed the material as well as moral interests of the nation to a crude bigotry and a blind egotism.

In view of Bossuet's miracle, it might be presumed that Calvinism had been torn up by the roots in six months. Bossuet, it turned out, had been too hasty in interpreting the work of grace carried out by the dragoons. The Protestants had been driven into the fold of St Peter, the vast majority had not been converted. It was necessary to send out troops of missionaries to supplement the miracle wrought by the dragoons. For this kind of propaganda, the drunken parish priest[1] was as little fitted as the drunken dragoon. The services of Fénélon, Bourdaloue, Fléchier, and other eminent preachers were, therefore, requisitioned to instruct the new converts. The Jesuits furnished contingents of ardent helpers. They followed the track of the dragoons, but they did not find it a smooth one. Preaching and disputation proved arduous work even to a Fénélon, the wisest and the most winning of these missionaries, whose letters are full of complaints at the denseness and the obstinacy of the Huguenot mind. The terror of the dragonnades having subsided, the truth will not penetrate their stubborn souls. While the dragoon could make them swear by the Koran, if he chose, the poor missionary could not get them to repeat a single paternoster. Even Fénélon was obliged to confess that it was necessary to keep the spectre of the dragoon on the horizon in order to lend efficacy to his arguments. The dragoon was, therefore, let loose once more. The north and east[2] were harrowed by these spiritual husbandmen in spurs, as the south and west had been, in order to drive the good seed into the hard soil of the Protestant mind. The last clause of the edict of revocation had recognised the right of unconverted Protestants to their religious opinions, while proscribing the public assertion of them, but the clause was more honoured in the breach than in the observance. The intendants were directed to have recourse to the billet, and fresh legislation provided additional expedients of persecution. The most execrable of these directed that children of five years and upwards were to be filched from their parents and put under the charge of orthodox relatives, or of Catholics, whom the judges might nominate, for the purpose of being educated in the true faith. The wretched parents must, moreover, pay for their maintenance, and no appeal was permissible.[3]

If Protestantism was not extirpated, it was certainly not for lack

[1] For the prevalent immorality of the clergy, see Benoît, iv. 40, 41.

[2] See Benoît, v. 887-897.

[3] Isambert, xix. 544, 545 (January 1686).

of ingenuity in devising means of converting the rising generation. And yet it was not extirpated, though France was robbed of many of its best citizens. Thousands found their way to England, Holland, Germany, Switzerland, in spite of the watchfulness of their persecutors on the eastern frontier and the western seaboard, and the penalty of banishment to the galleys for the male, and perpetual imprisonment for the female fugitives caught in the attempt to escape.[1] Many were caught and thus punished, but many more managed to elude the guards that patrolled the frontiers and the roads leading to them. Some were smuggled as merchandise into the holds of vessels bound for England and Holland, labelled as a barrel of claret or a bale of soft goods; some braved the waves in fishing boats and skiffs; some might be seen wending their way along the roads as grave pilgrims, to Loretta, or Notre Dame de Liesse in Picardy; some risked the disguise of beggars, or pedlars, or porters, or sportsmen, or travellers of distinction. Alas, the galley, the dungeon, the distant shores of America were the destination of too many who did not court the disguise of the night or the forest, until galleys and dungeons were overcrowded, and their persecutors relaxed their alertness for a season, from the sheer impossibility of knowing what to do with their prisoners.[2] The resolution that ran the risk of discovery, and braved the hardships of flight, is an eloquent tribute to the heroic steadfastness of these forlorn runaways. In braving these risks and hardships the women were as heroic as the men, and if feminine fanaticism had much to answer for this execrable policy of repression, feminine devotion under persecution stands forth in noble lineaments in these high-principled, true women who threaded their way with their little ones, in cold and darkness, through gloomy forests and across dreary moors, for the love of God and freedom of conscience. What a contrast do they present to the bigoted courtesans who dallied with bigoted libertines in the halls of Versailles in luxury and wantonness, and sang Ave Marias with the most punctual scrupulousness. Posterity, at least, will know where to seek for true religion and true womanhood. It will find it in the forest and on the moors, it will hardly find it in Madame de Maintenon's boudoir, certainly not among the galaxy of pious ladies whose virtue could not be trusted out of their husbands' company.

It is a strange fact that, while Louis was engaged in vindicating the majesty of the Church by a brutal persecution, he was on bitterly hostile terms with the Pope. In 1685 Innocent XI. was sulking over Louis' encroachments on the ecclesiastical authority, and instead

[1] Isambert, xix. 547, 548 (May 1686). [2] See Benoît, v. 946-955.

of singing Te Deums and striking medals, as his predecessor had done on the occasion of the Massacre of St Bartholomew, only congratulated the defender of the faith in formal terms. Louis' arrogance did not, as we have seen, spare the Pope in matters in which his political prerogative was concerned. Nor was he disposed to brook its limitation in matters ecclesiastical. He was as resolute to assert his supremacy over the Church, as over the Protestants, within his own dominions, and in this policy his bishops were equally ready to back him. He played the autocrat over the Church with hardly a murmur from the clergy. He dealt with their quinquennial assemblies as arbitrarily as he dealt with those of the Provincial Estates. He prevented the election of some obnoxious deputy, and abridged both the number of members and the duration of the assembly.[1] He obtained the obsequious vote of a *don gratuit*[2] from a body who had strenuously resisted the demands of even a Richelieu. He reduced the number of ecclesiastical holidays and threatened to carry out Colbert's plan of radical legislation against the monks.[3] He even claimed the right to dispose of the patrimony of the Church as he pleased, and substantiated this claim to the extent of drawing the revenues of all vacant sees, not merely within the royal domains, but throughout the kingdom. He nominated to all vacancies in the gift of the bishop within such sees until the new bishop had taken the oath of allegiance.[4] It was this assumption in particular that angered the Pope and produced a violent controversy. The Bishops of Pamiers and Aleth resented the claim, and were supported by Innocent. On his side, Louis was backed by the clergy and the Parliament,[5] and, thus backed, he maintained a hot duel with his adversary for several years, under the old banner of the liberties of the Gallican Church. In contrast to their predecessors of the States-General of 1614, who, under the leadership of Cardinal Duperron, had shown their Ultramontane sympathies as the staunch defenders of the papal supremacy, the clergy, led by Bossuet, now repudiated the pretensions of the Pope in the celebrated Articles of 1682. These four articles declared that kings were not subject to the Pope in things temporal, and could not be deposed by papal decree, and that the exercise of the papal authority, even in matters of faith, was dependent on the consent of a General Council, and subject to the

[1] See, for instance, Corresp. Admin., iv. 79-81, 85, 86, 99, 116.

[2] See, for instance, Journal de Dangeau, i. 73.

[3] Histoire de Colbert, ii. 363-373. [4] Isambert, xix. 67-69 (1673).

[5] Isambert, xix. 272, and see Mémoires de Dan. de Cosnac, edited for the Société de l'Histoire de France by the Count de Cosnac. Introduction, i. 65-70.

reservation of the liberties of the Gallican Church.[1] This explicit declaration of the independence of the king and the fallibility of the Pope irritated Innocent beyond measure, and embittered the controversy. He refused to grant bulls of institution to Louis' heretic bishops, and Louis threatened to do without them. It looked for a time as if the King of France would play the *rôle* of Henry VIII. of England over again, but as there was no Anne Boleyn in question to drive matters to extremities, the Pope had ultimately the best of the quarrel, and in 1693 Louis receded and retracted the obnoxious articles.

SOURCES OF THIS CHAPTER.—Isambert, Recueil, xviii. and xix.; Mémoires Historiques; Correspondance Générale de Madame de Maintenon, edited by Th. Lavallée; Correspondance Administrative; Lettres de Madame de Sévigné; Mémoires du Marquis de Villette, edited for the Société de l'Histoire de France by Monmerqué; Benoît, Histoire de l'Édit de Nantes (Delft, 1693-1695); Conduite de la Cour de France in tom. x. of Archives Curieuses; Histoire de Louvois; Histoire de Colbert; Mémoires de Daniel de Cosnac, edited for the Société de l'Histoire de France by the Count de Cosnac; Journal de Dangeau.

[1] Isambert, xix. 379-386.

## CHAPTER XIV.

LOUIS XIV. PROVOKES THE HOSTILITY OF EUROPE AND ESTRANGES THE PEOPLE—ABORTIVE REFORM PROJECTS OF BOISGUILBERT AND VAUBAN (1685-1700).

THE extirpation of heresy within did not interrupt the work of aggression without France. Louis pursued his aggressive schemes even in time of peace. By the aid of legal and diplomatic sophistry, he united all the territories formerly dependent on Alsace and the three bishoprics of Toul, Metz, and Verdun to his crown, and, like a second Charlemagne, summoned kings and princes, among them the monarchs of Spain and Sweden, to do homage, for the territories so united, to their overlord of France, on pain of confiscation.[1] The free municipality of Strasburg was forced or bribed to accept annexation in September 1681. Almost simultaneously Catinat entered Piedmontese territory and seized Casale, which should serve as a vantage ground for further acquisitions in Italy. In 1684 Genoa was bombarded and consigned to the flames for venturing to resent French dictation, and compelled to accept Louis' protection with every mark of humiliation. A dispute about the terms of the Treaty of Nymwegen served as a pretext for putting in a claim to Luxemburg, to which he laid siege in the spring of the same year, and for a second invasion of Flanders in order to compel its cession on the plea of compensation. He had the audacity, notwithstanding, to assure the King of Spain that he had no intention of breaking the peace, while, as Voltaire remarks, he made of a time of peace a period of conquests. Such insolence was very exasperating, but it succeeded meanwhile. The Truce of Ratisbon assured him the possession of these acquisitions for twenty years, and, of course, the twenty years meant for Louis in perpetuity. He had now reached the zenith of his territorial power, the apogee of his reign, as a historian has called it,[2] but he had gained the summit

[1] Voltaire, Siècle de Louis XIV., 156.

[2] Legrelle, La Diplomatie Française et la Succession d'Espagne.

only to descend the declivity. He had overstepped the bounds of European forbearance, and he had dangerously strained the financial capacity of France. In vain had Colbert implored him to employ this interval of peace to ameliorate the depression of the people. In vain did he read to him the reports of intendants, bishops, receivers-general on the destitution prevalent in the provinces. "Another cannon shot," he warned, "and we plunge into the abyss." Louis discarded the policy of Colbert for that of Louvois, and preferred to provoke the universal hostility of Europe. The passion of conquest had now overmastered the passion of reform, and with a powerful army and navy, and a truculent and imperious war minister, Louis was prepared to go any length in the path of ambition. *L'appétit vient en mangeant*, and the royal appetite was appalling. The imperial crown as well as that of Spain will alone sate the craving for power and glory. A steady stream of subsidies flowed across the Rhine and the Channel in order to secure support for projects which a host of sycophant pamphleteers were paid to vaunt and demonstrate. He might have spared his exchequer this heavy drain. The time had passed when Louis XIV. could buy Europe. Europe was now busy with the problem of preserving its independence by guaranteeing the Treaty of Nymwegen.

The spirit of resistance found a rallying point in the question of the succession to the Palatinate. Louis disputed the title of the new elector, the Duke of Neuburg, to certain parts of the electorate,[1] on behalf of his sister-in-law, the Duchess of Orleans, sister of the late elector. The Duke of Neuburg appealed to the aggrieved powers, and his appeal found a ready response. Louis' intolerance had, moreover, intensified the irritation felt by the Protestant princes at his political aggressions. Holland, Brandenburg, Sweden, England saw in the revocation of the Edict of Nantes a menace to Protestantism, as they saw in his insolent ambition a menace to political liberty. The cruel persecution of the Vaudois, which he instigated as a fitting supplement to the persecution of his own subjects, increased their alarm and their animosity.[2] The fugitive Huguenots and Vaudois, who told the harrowing tale of their sufferings to horrified and sympathising listeners in Germany, Holland, and England, were perhaps the most formidable enemies that Louis and Louvois, who held them of so little account, could have made. Even Spain and Austria became the champions of freedom of conscience, in the interest of the balance of power, if not of religious liberty. By a strange freak of history the task of

[1] Rousset, Histoire de Louvois. iv. 60. 61. [2] *Ibid.*, iv. 1-28.

vindicating the balance of power and religious liberty passed from Paris to Vienna and Madrid. In the latter half of the seventeenth century, Louis XIV. played the part of Philip II. in the latter half of the sixteenth. Instead of the alliance of Holland, Sweden, and Protestant Germany with France in defence of political and religious freedom against Spain and the emperor, Sweden, Holland, and Protestant Germany now leagued themselves with Spain and the emperor to oppose Louis' dictation. Even the Pope, smarting under the declaration of 1682, and sundry other grievances, gave his blessing to the League of Augsburg (July 1686), which his intense hatred of Louis materially contributed to cement. The dispute over the succession to the Palatinate was complicated by the quarrel over the choice of a candidate to fill the vacant electorate of Cologne. The Pope supported the election of Prince Joseph Clement of Bavaria against Louis' nominee, Cardinal Fürstenberg, Bishop of Strasburg, and thus dealt a blow at the power of Louis at a point where it was of the utmost importance that it should be strong. The occupation of the electorate by French troops in support of Fürstenberg in September 1688,[1] confirmed the apprehensions of the German princes and solidified the League of Augsburg. A still more inveterate enemy of the French king, the Protestant Prince of Orange, was scheming to wrest the thrones of England and Scotland from James II., and the growing strength of the combination against Louis enabled him to complete the preparations for his expedition in the certainty of its co-operation in the defence of Holland. No one played into his hands with better effect than the head of a creed for whose sake James was about to deprive himself of a crown. The Pope as the active partisan of English Protestantism is a curious spectacle, and an instructive lesson in the ethics of statecraft. "To preserve the peace of Europe," remarked a witty diplomatist, "it is necessary that the King of England should turn Protestant, and the Holy Father Catholic." If Protestantism found a singular champion at Rome,[2] it possessed a no less zealous friend in the Spanish ambassador at the Hague, who ordered a mass to be sung for the success of William's expedition. William's success proved to be the guarantee, not merely of English Protestantism, but of the independence of Europe. It was the forerunner of the Grand Alliance (1689-90) of England, Holland,

[1] Histoire de Louvois, iv. 88, 89.

[2] It has been said in defence of Innocent that he was ignorant of the real object of William's preparations. The diplomatic correspondence of the time disproves this assumption.

Sweden, Brandenburg,' the Emperor, Savoy, and Spain, which opposed an effectual barrier to Louis' ambition.

The vast preparations made by Louis showed that if the struggle promised to be an unequal, it would be a desperate one. Louvois exhausted the resources of his organising genius before his death in 1691, to equip the largest armies that had as yet taken the field in modern warfare.[1] Nearly half a million of men, under generals like Luxemburg and Catinat, were arrayed under the fleur-de-lys in the Low Countries, on the Rhine, and in Italy. Seignelay, Colbert's son, exerted himself with equal success to equip a formidable fleet, which ventured to cope with the united naval strength of England and Holland. "Alone against all," was the motto with which Louis hurled defiance in the teeth of Europe.[2] His only hope, besides his own resources, was in the Turk, then at war with the emperor. In this stern spirit the conflict opened, and was carried on with a ferocity which recalled some of the worst episodes of the Thirty Years' War. The desolation of the Palatinate, instigated by the truculent Louvois, proclaimed to horrified Europe the penalty of opposing the will of the Jupiter of Versailles, who respected no rights, even those of defenceless women and children, in the prosecution of his ends. The burning of Heidelberg, Mannheim, Spires, Worms, and other towns, besides countless villages, amid scenes of pillage worthy of a horde of Tartars, is an eternal stain on the memory of Louis and his minister. This terrible crime was euphemistically explained as "a defensive measure." It should place a desert between France and its enemies. It was such a defence as only savages could resort to, and it was besides a mistake in tactics. The attack on the Palatinate by diverting the strength of Louis from Holland, facilitated William's plan for the invasion of England, if it was not, as some historians think, the indispensable condition of its successful achievement. William would probably not have been deterred from his purpose, even if his antagonist had concentrated his armies round Maestricht instead of on the middle Rhine, but Louis at least did not give himself the benefit of the chance of placing a very formidable difficulty in his way. Moreover, the effect of this outrage was to steel Germany to a life-and-death struggle with its brutal aggressor. Thousands of the miserable inhabitants who survived the terrible experiences of the winter of

[1] Histoire de Louvois, iv. 88, 157. Cf. Isambert, xx. 60, 63, 66, 70, 73, 100, etc.

[2] Declaration of War against Holland, 26th November 1688; against Spain, 15th April 1689; against England, 25th June 1689 (Isambert, xx. 65, 73-75, 77).

1688-89 fled from the smoking ruins of their homes to bear the tale of this devilish outrage of the laws of war and humanity across the Rhine, and to proclaim the crusade against the modern Attila. "The French," cried an indignant writer, voicing the general horror and anger, "formerly passed for an honest, humane, and civilised nation. To-day a Frenchman and a cannibal mean the same thing to the minds of his neighbours."[1] The advance of 80,000 men under the Duke of Lorraine, and the recovery of Maintz, Bonn, Philipsburg, and the consequent withdrawal of the French army into Alsace and Lorraine, was the response of the empire to this inhuman challenge during the campaign of 1689. That of 1690 was rendered memorable by the exploits of Luxemburg in Belgium and Catinat in Piedmont. The bloody victory of Fleurus over the Prince of Waldeck, which, from the number of captured flags, earned for Luxemburg the epithet of the Upholsterer of Notre Dame, was nullified by the detachment of part of his army to reinforce that of the Dauphin on the Moselle, and the consequent inability of the marshal to follow up his success. In Italy, Catinat secured a footing in Piedmont by the victory of Staffarda over the Duke of Savoy, and threatened Turin. Fortune added another success to the arms of Louis in Tourville's victory over an Anglo-Dutch fleet off Beachy Head. Against this series of successes the allies could pit the battle of the Boyne, which asserted William's title to the possession of Ireland, and placed at his command the resources of three kingdoms, in addition to those of Holland, in the struggle with his arch-enemy. The operations of the campaign of 1691 were not marked by any great exploit on either side. Those of 1692, for which both belligerents made vast preparations, were, on the contrary, signalised by memorable actions on sea and land. The disaster off Beachy Head was redeemed by the destruction of Tourville's fleet by Admiral Russell off La Hogue, within sight of the army of Marshal Bellefonds, which was to strike a second blow for James II. in Ireland. The capture of Namur and the victory of Steenkerk were hardly compensation for a disaster which reasserted the naval supremacy of the allies, and rendered futile any further attempt to dislodge William from the throne of James. Luxemburg again proved superior to his stubborn adversary in the terrible battle of Neerwinden in the following year, 1693. The conquest of Belgium seemed assured, but the marshal was more fortunate in winning battles than in following them up, and allowed William, who was often defeated, but never beaten, sufficient respite to draw

[1] Soupirs de la France, 13me. Mémoire; Histoire de Louvois, iv. 183.

succours from Holland, and repair the effects of his defeat. On the side of the Rhine nothing more decisive resulted from the operations of the army of the Dauphin than the capture and pillage of Heidelberg for the second time. In Italy, Catinat added the victory of Marsaglia to the brilliant, but unproductive achievements of French arms. While Te Deums ascended to heaven in honour of the martial triumphs of Louis and his generals, the allies were not conquered, and the people were perishing of hunger as the result of bad harvests and crushing taxation. This fact, coupled with the near prospect of the death of Charles II. of Spain, and the imminence of the question of the Spanish succession, determined Louis to offer concessions all round in spite of his victories. He conciliated the Pope by retracting the articles of 1682. The resentment of Europe was, however, too bitter to dispense with the arbitration of the sword. William and Leopold were determined to impose, not to accept peace, and their firmness derived considerable justification from the disregard of treaties on the part of their adversary. Louis had hitherto concluded peace only with the intention of breaking it, even while professing to observe it. If William could help it, he should be deprived for the future of the means of playing fast and loose with the interests of Europe at the dictates of an insatiable and unscrupulous ambition. The war accordingly lengthened into four campaigns more. Victories, which, though brilliant and bloody, were not decisive, were of little effect against an antagonist like William, who proved formidable in defeat, and whose resourceful perseverance was at length rewarded by the successes which, after the death of Luxemburg in January 1695, and the advent of Villeroi as his successor in the command of the French army in Belgium, attended his operations. Namur was retaken, and though Louis succeeded in balancing this reverse by detaching the Duke of Savoy from the Grand Alliance, it was only at the price of surrendering Nice, Casale, and Pignerol. He could only break up the alliance by making similar sacrifices to the other powers whom he had despoiled, and though still maintaining vast forces in the field for the purpose of making armed demonstrations, he was compelled by the exhaustion of France and the news from Madrid to signify his willingness to negotiate on the basis of the Treaties of Westphalia and Nymwegen, and thus pave the way for the convention of a congress at Ryswick. This congress (May–September 1697) terminated in an agreement on his part to restore all his conquests in Spain, Belgium, and Germany, with the exception of Strasburg, to give back Lorraine to its duke, to recognise William's title to the

British crown, to accord to Holland an advantageous commercial treaty, which reversed Colbert's policy, and to permit Dutch garrisons to occupy a number of fortresses in the Spanish Netherlands, known as the Barrier towns.[1] It was a humiliating transaction alike from the standpoint of honour and the enormous cost to France. It displayed to the world the complete failure of Louis' statecraft. His omniscience had been terribly at fault. He had thrown away almost all that he had gained since 1678, and to achieve this sorry result he had brought France almost to the brink of ruin. It was hardly possible for even flattery to hide the truth, while for patriotism there was no Lethean draught of flattery to induce illusion. Patriots like Vauban could not contain their indignation, though they only furtively gave vent to the grim truth. "I regard this peace as more infamous than that of Cateau Cambresis," wrote Vauban to Racine, "which dishonoured Henry II., and which has always been considered as the most shameful in French history. If we had lost five or six battles, one after the other, and a large part of the kingdom, if the State had been in the utmost peril, and could only have been saved by peace, it would still have been possible to make a better treaty. . . . I cannot find words to explain conduct so extraordinary, but if I had I should be very careful not to put them on paper. Burn this letter, please."[2] Vauban forgets, however, to touch the worst feature of the situation. He has no word of condemnation for the fatal militarism, which at Ryswick found a just retribution; for the infatuated policy which urged a ten years' war, and won barren victories with no territorial or other advantage to compensate the ruin of the country. This policy was in striking contrast to that which led to the solid advantages gained by Richelieu and Mazarin; it was unfortunately to be the policy of the next hundred years, and to contribute materially to the financial *impasse*, the terrible exhaustion and oppression which at last sought a remedy in revolution. It was a calamity for France that its rulers henceforth understood but too seldom the elements of sound policy. We have reached the period when a long series of exhausting wars, broken by fitful intervals of peace, serve as so many milestones on the road to revolution. The War of the Spanish Succession, the War of the Austrian Succession, the Seven Years' War, the American War are for France the milestones to this goal.

During this decade of war the condition of the body politic, in

[1] See Actes et Mémoires de la Paix de Ryswick, and Letters of William III. and Louis XIV. (Grimblot). For the campaign see Histoire de Louvois, iv.

[2] See the letter in Histoire de Louvois, iv. 541, 542.

the matter of finance, was that of a patient, whom the State physician, in the person of the controller-general, M. Pontchartrain, who displaced M. Pelletier, Colbert's successor, in 1689, strove to cure by the application of one desperate remedy after another. As the result of this course of violent treatment, the patient had well-nigh reached the last gasp at the conclusion of the war. The finance doctor was well adapted for the rough and cruel operations of his office. He had all the effrontery, the sanguine self-possession of the quack and veritable novice he was. From a Sully, a Colbert, what a descent to a Pontchartrain, who, to quote J. B. Say, "ought to have been, in the interest of the State, controlled, rather than controller." He was not wanting in self-assurance, at all events. He wielded the lancet with such vigour, he prescribed such strong doses of his quack medicines that the wonder is that the constitution of the patient survived the successive shocks of his treatment. It was only by a miracle, apparently, that the patient's death and funeral were postponed till the advent in 1699 of his successor, M. Chamillart, a still less capable, if less venturesome quack than himself. It is only necessary to mention some of Pontchartrain's prescriptions to judge of their effects—arbitrary recoinage of the currency at a profit to the State and a proportionate loss to the subject,[1] sale of five hundred patents of nobility at 2,000 crowns each,[2] the melting of silver ornaments and utensils for the purpose of turning them into money,[3] creation and sale of countless offices and monopolies,[4] new taxes, particularly a capitation tax[5] which, while it did not in principle respect privilege, winked in practice at exemption, abolition of municipal election, and creation of mayors and councillors *en titre* at so much per head,[6] the emission of *rentes* at ruinous interest.[7] Such is merely a sample of Pontchartrain's proficiency in financial quackery, not to mention the ruinous effects of war, famine, high prices, religious persecution on commerce, industry, agriculture, and a debt of over a milliard of livres. Imagination may represent to itself the cadaverous appearance of the body politic thus purged and bled by a quack who was also a cynic. "Each time that your majesty creates an office," said Pontchartrain, "God creates a fool to buy it." Ample details, most of them of a harrowing description, are available from the reports of

[1] Isambert, xx. 201 (September 1693). [2] *Ibid.*, xx. 261 (March 1696).
[3] *Ibid.*, 100 (December 1689).
[4] See, for instance, *ibid.*, xx. 121-124 (March 1691). There is a veritable swarm of such edicts.
[5] *Ibid.*, xx. 243 (April 1695). [6] *Ibid.*, xx. 158-164 (Aug. 1692).
[7] *Ibid.*, xx. 89 (November 1689), and 103 (April 1690).

the intendants, who were commissioned in 1697 to inquire into and report on the state of the provinces for the enlightenment of the Duke of Burgundy in the arts of statesmanship, to show that imagination could hardly exaggerate the appalling misery of the reality. In some districts the population had diminished to a half or even a third. The fisheries and maritime commerce of Normandy, the linen trade of Brittany with England and Holland, were ruined by war and increase of duties. Requisitions and contributions had desolated, apparently beyond recovery, the frontier provinces of the north and east, exposed to the brunt of the war. Famine and the decline of manufactures had decimated many of the cities of the central provinces. The restriction of circulation by the provincial customs had prevented the abundance of Bourbonnais from succouring the need of Perigord, which had lost a third of its inhabitants owing to the destruction of the vines and the high price of bread. The commerce of Bordeaux had fallen into the hands of foreign merchants, and the silk industry of Lyons had declined to less than a fourth of its former production. The "État de la France," in which the Count of Boulainvilliers summarised these voluminous reports, is, for the most part, melancholy reading.[1] The reports speak of the blight of commerce and industry, though there are gleams of prosperity here and there. If the count speak truly, the intendants did not tell half the truth, and only reveal the shadow of the awful misery of the people. He charges them with incapacity, negligence, and even falsification of fact. They have no care for the general utility; their only thought is the advantage of their master and their own advancement. They are alike flatterers and slaves, who fawn on the king and frown on the people. For them the king is above the laws and the rules of human probity; to him belongs all, and he may do all that he wills. "They deliver the people over to the hardest slavery, the nobility to the disgrace of a habitual degradation, and the whole country to the pillage of themselves and their creatures."[2] Boulainvilliers is an aggrieved aristocrat, and therefore hardly an impartial critic, but he is at the same time a patriot, and the reports only too amply bear out the fact that this centralised administration was no longer what it had been in the days when its institution was a reform. The intendants and the system they represent are condemned by their own words. This or that

[1] See État de la France, par le Comte de Boulainvilliers, 3 tomes, fol.; cf. Correspondance des Contrôleurs Généraux des Finances, publiée par A. M. De Boislisle.

[2] État de la France, i., Pref., 5.

industry is languishing at some places, extinct at others. At Sens, in the generality of Paris, for instance, the manufacture of lace is extinct. Poverty has lamed enterprise, and this poverty is universal. "The general evil is poverty, which hinders the people from profiting from the resources of each district."[1] In the district of Ponthieu, in the generality of Picardy, the workmen in some villages are in danger of dying of hunger.[2] "The misery of the people of the generality of Orleans is such that its commerce is insignificant."[3] The population is diminished by one-fifth. In the district of Beauce the peasants are miserably fed, although it has the finest soil imaginable for the production of grain.[4] Champagne is in a miserable plight—poor prices, no market for its grain, no sale for its wines, diminution of cultivation, decay of commerce, industry at zero. Here, too, the peasants subsist on the scantiest of diets in order to be able to pay the oppressive taxes and escape confiscation. Troyes, formerly the most thriving town in France, has only 20,000 inhabitants, instead of 50,000 or 60,000.[5] The manufacture of linen, blankets, wax candles, serges, satin, is "very much diminished," the tanneries almost extinct. The wine industry of Reims cannot be prosecuted at a profit, its manufactures are so reduced that the number of workmen is less by a half than it was ten years before. Similar shrinkage of population at Chalons, where the oppressions of the soldiery and the general misery have destroyed the wine and textile industries.[6] The same decay is observable at most of the other towns. Where the pasturage is abundant, as at St Menehould, there is a lack of cattle to graze it, the peasant being too poor to buy.[7] Franche Comté suffers from lack of consumption for its corn, which sells at a ruinous price. Rouen suffers from shrinkage of population, which is daily increasing. Famine, war, misery have thinned the people.[8] The customs of Rouen, known by the name of *la Romaine*, produced, in 1688, 1,247,647 livres, in 1695, only 167,271;[9] a melancholy commentary on its commercial collapse. The corn trade of the generality "has been destroyed, partly by the war, partly by the exhaustion of the people, who do not consume, and by the poor price, which does not pay the labour expended on its production."[10] At Coutances, in the generality of Caen, "commerce is absolutely ruined."[11] The persecutions of the Huguenots, as at some other places, pestilence, misery, war, are responsible for the diminution of the population in the generality of Alençon. "The towns

[1] État de la France, i. 60. [2] *Ibid.*, i. 72. [3] *Ibid.*, i. 131, 132.
[4] *Ibid.*, i. 132. [5] *Ibid.*, i. 205. [6] *Ibid.*, i. 206. [7] *Ibid.*, i. 206.
[8] *Ibid.*, ii. 3. [9] *Ibid.*, ii. 12. [10] *Ibid.*, ii. 13. [11] *Ibid.*, ii. 31.

are almost abandoned; half the houses falling in ruins; many of the inmates have no roof over their heads; poverty wears an air of melancholy and ferocity everywhere."[1] The manufactures of Brittany have been ruined by the war and by a prohibitive policy which have driven the English and Dutch to manufacture for their own needs. The linen manufacture of Rennes, for instance, was formerly valued at 800,000 livres a year. It is now only 80,000.[2] And so on in much the same strain, which it were too monotonous to repeat.

The "État de la France" is a grim commentary on the infatuated foreign and religious policy, the vicious fiscal administration, and the mistaken economic system which combined to produce this melancholy state of things. A wretched harvest of blight and misery has followed the springtide of reform and good government. Yet there is hardly cause for astonishment at this sad transformation of the scene within the space of twenty years. Given a ruler of the stamp of Louis XIV., and a system of government which lends itself to oppression and repression, and failure was bound to come. The metamorphosis of Louis XIV. from a sanguine reformer into an ambitious despot, was bound to prove calamitous to France as well as Europe. There was, moreover, only too much scope for misgovernment in a fiscal and economic system which might prove a tolerable instrument of prosperity under a Sully and a Colbert, but became a terrible instrument of oppression under an incapable or an egotistic ruler, who believed in his own infallibility, and imagined that he could make up for official incapacity by his own wisdom. It was the bane of France, under the old *régime*, that its financial administration was not conducted on what we should call business principles. The Sullys and the Colberts are the exception, the Pontchartrains and others of the quack species are the rule. Short intervals of kosmos are succeeded by long periods of chaos, and from this date to the Revolution it is almost unbroken chaos. War, extravagance, corruption augmented the evils of a system which was in itself unjust, oppressive, and antiquated. The exemption of the privileged classes, which laid the bulk of taxation on the poor, the method of farming the revenue and exposing the people to the exactions of selfish officials, the recourse to the most ruinous expedients, known as *affaires extraordinaires*, for augmenting the revenue in time of peace as well as war, the want of economy and order, the fatal policy of keeping the taxpayer in a condition of perpetual pinch and strain by a reckless expenditure, lamed the vigour of the State, and kept

[1] État de la France, ii. 46. [2] *Ibid.*, ii. 64.

the people in a long agony of poverty and misery. The embarrassments of the treasury became periodic; and while they furnished a pretext for fleecing the people, they afforded an opportunity to the financiers to profit by its straits. Corruption throve on this fungus of a bad system. Enormous fortunes were amassed out of the distress of the nation, the necessities of the government. The financial administration of France during this long pre-revolutionary period was, in a word, profligate, reckless, and suicidal. Frequently recurring periods of dissipation and corruption were followed by spasmodic and ineffectual attempts at recuperation, only to be succeeded by even greater excess, till the collapse of the body politic was inevitable.

The misery begotten by a vicious financial system was intensified by an equally vicious economic system. Colbert's application of the traditional dogma of State control and interference is partly responsible for the industrial decline which Boulainvilliers chronicles. The arbitrary interference with the law of supply and demand in regard to the corn trade was specially fatal. We have reached a period of economic paralysis. The frequent prohibition of the export of grain paralysed agriculture, and consequently dried up the food supply of the people, which oft-recurring years of scarcity still further diminished.[1] A large part of the soil went out of cultivation,[2] because the peasant had no market for his produce, and when famine supervened, as it did in one year out of every three, a large part of the people was forced to subsist on herbs and roots or die of hunger.[3] In spite of a temporary prosperity, the excessive State interference with industry[4] was ultimately calamitous. Manufacturers and merchants complained loudly of the encroachments of the government, which in fixing, for instance, the price, quality, and measure of goods, took no account of variety of taste in the consumer, and thus curtailed the market for both manufacturer and retailer. Certain it is that the plethora of industrial statutes and declarations did far more harm than good.[5] Similarly, prohibitive tariffs diminished, instead of increasing trade. Hence the reaction against the system of control which, as we have seen, already made

[1] See Isambert, xx. 198-201. The government evidently did not understand the root of the evil, which was due, not to the artifices of the grain merchants, but to a bad system which made plenty impossible.

[2] *Ibid.*, xx. 201-203.

[3] See Histoire de Colbert, ii. 57, 58, and Cadet, Pierre de Boisguilbert, 146-152.

[4] See, for instance, Isambert, xx. 121, 177.

[5] Histoire de Colbert, i. 329.

itself felt during Colbert's lifetime, and grew in strength during the two decades succeeding his death, when the general decline of trade and industry went from bad to worse. Louis' wars were indeed a disturbing factor, but the main cause lay in the policy of protection and interference, which was simply a system of suffocation. Such is the testimony of a council of commercial delegates[1] from the chief towns, which met in Paris in 1701. Of the twelve delegates only one, the representative of Rouen, expressed approval of this policy. The remaining eleven were of the opinion of the delegate of Lyons. "We must recede from the maxim of M. Colbert, who pretended that France could do without the rest of the world. This is to go against nature and the decrees of Providence, who has distributed different gifts to different peoples, in order to oblige them to maintain a reciprocal commerce." "Liberty," exclaimed the representative of Nantes, "is the soul of commerce."[2]

This financial and economic policy of squeeze and pinch, which made the existence of the people a purgatory of vexation and depression, was delineated by Boisguilbert in bold strokes of irony and indignation. He introduces Louis XIV. addressing the miserable peasant and dealer in a serio-comic tone, which is, however, replete with the sardonic wrath of the real author, and is worthy of Beaumarchais. It is a terrible exposure of an execrable financial and economic system, with its chicanery, its licensed cheatery, its ponderous tyranny, and its merciless oppression. "When you sell a hogshead of wine, you must pay seventeen dues to seven or eight separate customs offices, which are only open at certain hours of certain days, and if you fail to pay at even the least important of these offices, although you may have found it shut on your arrival, and may not have been able to delay your journey without great expense, your merchandise is confiscated, with your cart and horses into the bargain, for the profit of the owners of said office, who will carry it against you if you do not confess yourself a delinquent. Continuing your journey with your goods, it is equally necessary to emit a declaration at every barrier you pass, and to wait as long as it may please the clerks to loiter before receiving it, even if you must waste as much time as it would take you to make four journeys. Further, if you wish to sell your goods to foreign buyers, who are eagerly desirous of purchasing at a reasonable price, it is my prerogative to place such an exorbitant imposition on the products

[1] Isambert, xx. 364, 365, established June 1700.

[2] See Histoire de Colbert, i. 329-331, and the same author's Histoire du Système Protecteur en France, chap. iv.

of your labour, that they are obliged to go elsewhere in order to provide themselves. Thus, although I gain not a penny by it, your goods must lie on your hands at a dead loss, with all the expenses to which you have been put in the production of them. You may often see them perish in your factory or your barns, especially your liquors, without being able to get a penny for them, although at a day's journey from your home they are worth famine price. Only if you risk bringing them there, you may lose both your trouble and your merchandise, because I have let out to a revenue farmer certain rights to levy toll on goods on passage, in regard to which it is necessary to observe many formalities, and those interested are both accusers and judges. Furthermore, it is incumbent on you to pay me a certain annual sum, which is nowise in proportion to the lands you hold of me, so that you must often pay double, as the owner of only five acres, of that which another in the same parish pays who owns thirty. But it is necessary that you buy the favour of those who make the assessment, in general as well as particular, who are entirely within their rights to observe no justice in this matter. Besides this, it is as much as your solvency is worth if you do not take good care to pay as regularly as the clock, for your failure to do so is your ruin, since it is the interest of those to whom I let the farm of the taxes to cause as much expense as possible in the recovery of all arrears of payment; so that, though this sort of expense is an abuse, it is at least a much less vexatious one than to be subject, as is the farmer of the taxes, every year to an augmentation of the price of the farm, which is an inseparable penalty of facility of payment. Have a care also to be very circumspect in your affairs, and by all means profess poverty. If you have money, bury it in place of trading with it, for fear of suffering in your pocket from these augmentations of the price of the farm of the revenue. The tax farmer will put it on if you give him the slightest provocation. It is even advisable not to put on your land the cattle that would help to manure it. Be careful, too, to observe the same prudence in regard to consumption—that is to say, in regard to your expenses in the matter of food and clothing, for it is necessary to affect the greatest poverty in these particulars. Finally, since the taxes are very badly assessed and still worse paid, whether in consequence of necessity, or affectation of poverty, it is incumbent on you to pay up the arrears of others every four or five years, in which contingency, if you are not completely ruined, you will be very seriously embarrassed, for neither you nor your fellow-taxpayers are quit by abandoning every sou you have got, and it is your doom to perish in

prison for not paying a tax four times above the legal assessment, whilst you have the consolation of reflecting that some of your neighbours do not pay a twentieth part of what they should."[1]

This is a withering exposure of the misgovernment of "the reign miraculous," and it is no exaggeration. It is the unvarnished truth, but it is not known at court, where Bossuet tunes his adulatory lyre and pictures in glowing rhetoric in Louis XIV. the shadow of Almighty God. It is, however, known to every casual observer, and among these casual observers were some bold men who dared to speak and, in spite of the censor, to publish the truth. They gave voice to the popular misery, the growing impatience of tyranny, in a host of pamphlets and memoirs, and in these furtive prints is to be found the measure of Louis XIV. as ruler, in these latter days, as seen by the suffering masses. Some of these critics are downright revolutionists. Louis has reigned too long, both for his own reputation and the welfare of France. He has forfeited the allegiance of his subjects by his despotism and bigotry, the forbearance of Europe by his ambition and his disregard of international rights. Such is the tenor of philippics like "La Monarchie Universelle de Louis XIV,"[2] the "Salut de la France à Monseigneur le Dauphin," the "Lettre du Marquis de Guiscard à M. de Chamillart,"[3] and the "Lettres d'un Gentilhomme Français (Michel le Vassor)." "The king is a Phaeton," cries the author of the "Salut de la France," "whom it is necessary to wrench from the chariot of the sun. For a long time he has been incapable of directing it. See ye not that the whole kingdom is in flames. If you will not do it, sir (the Dauphin), the people will do it themselves, for they can no longer suffer this tyranny. And if the people hesitate, the powers of Europe will not; they have agreed on this, arms in hand. They can no longer endure the fury of a king who burns, massacres, makes deserts of the most beautiful cities, wherever his troops penetrate. And if his subjects or his foreign enemies fail to do it, the God of vengeance will, for He is jealous of His glory, He will in no wise give it to another." The Marquis de Guiscard is still more defiant, and in this case invective is not the offspring of Protestant resentment, for the marquis is a Catholic who denounces persecution and tyranny, and refuses to own a tyrant and a bigot as his king. "You pretend that I am acting against my king" (he was the champion of

[1] Cadet, Pierre de Boisguilbert, 215-217.

[2] Translated from the Italian of Gregorio Leti, Amsterdam, 1689, 2 vols.

[3] In Archives Curieuses, second series, xi. See also his Mémoires in the same volume.

the Camisards). "Where is this king of whom you speak? I know no king in France. There is no longer but a vain name and miserable shadow of a king. Shall I regard as my king a prince who has plunged all his subjects into misery and slavery, who is guided only by his own caprice, by ambition, by ill-regulated passions, fatal to the nation, who has usurped all the rights of individuals, communities, towns, provinces, who has degraded all the orders of the kingdom and forbidden the Parliaments the sad freedom to make remonstrances, even for the discharge of their conscience? Shall I regard as my king a prince who, preferring the aggrandisement and the splendour of his house to that of the monarchy, plunges into a war" (War of the Spanish Succession), "which will probably only end in its complete destruction. Can you, in good faith, sir, aver that I act against my honour and my country? What do you understand, pray, by my country? If it is merely the person and the interests of Louis XIV., I confess that I work against it, but if my country is veritably nothing else than the union of several millions of men who have united in order to live under the same name, the same laws, the same interests, how dare you say that I act against it in doing the only thing that can draw it out of the imminent peril in which it is?"[1] In the "Soupirs de la France esclave que aspire après la Liberté," it is the voice of the outraged Protestant conscience that cries aloud for retribution. The author does not go the length of proposing the dethronement of Louis; he calls the Dauphin to the rescue and demands that he take the government out of the hands of insensate ministers, in order to save the State from ruin.

Some of these pamphleteers are both harsh and headlong in their judgments, but the facts which they asseverate go far to justify their impetuous invectives. There is no exaggeration in the appalling misery which they depict. Listen to Michel le Vassor (1695). "For six years we have had a shower of new edicts, new declarations, at least once or twice a week. . . . Does the government think that the allies are ignorant of the general discontent of nobles, clergy, Third Estate? It is proclaiming itself in Paris and in every city of the kingdom. Do the English and the Dutch not know that the revenue is considerably diminished? And if this fact were not notorious, it is not necessary to be very clever to see that the people have not the means to buy bread, and the consumption of wine at the cabaret and elsewhere is much less than formerly; consequently the entry dues of Paris and other cities bring in much less. The peasants are generally so miserably poor that they cannot buy their quota of salt,

[1] Archives Curieuses, xi. 295, 296, second series.

and therefore the salt tax has shrunk very considerably. The country is almost a desert. A multitude of people have died of hunger, of misery, of popular diseases. The villages which we used to see so fair and populous are destroyed and abandoned, the greater number of labourers and artisans is reduced to beggary." For the Augustus of the poets the people read Diocletian, who proscribed his best subjects and ruined the nation to support an oppressive militarism. "Do you not still read, engraved in large characters on one of the gates of Paris, 'Sub Ludovico Magno Abundantia parta'? Is this not to mock the people, to try to persuade them that the king causes them to enjoy every sort of abundance, whilst his agents filch from them their goods and their subsistence, whilst they are the prey of extreme misery and lack everything? What abundance, good God! Abundance of evils, sufferings, misfortunes. A wise minister of State, on reading this inscription, cried in his indignation, 'Blot out "Abundantia parta," and substitute "Sub Ludovico Decimo Quarto Abundantia rapta,"' for it is true that it is he who has wrung from us our goods, our abundance, our liberty. Behold the happiness of the French people under the longest and most tyrannic reign since the establishment of their monarchy. . . . Are we not entitled to throw off the yoke which overwhelms us daily?" The Marquis de Guiscard is equally positive on this point. "The misery of the people has reached its last extremity; the kingdom, drained, by infinite exactions, of men and money, is one vast and melancholy solitude; the tears, murmurs, remonstrances of the people are interdicted and punished as so many crimes and seditions; the magnates, who alone might oppose these vexations, partake of the spoil of the nation and the profits of tyranny, and are only bent on supporting it. A long reign, whose harshness is unrelaxed, permits no hope of the amendment of our miseries, or term to our sufferings."[1]

It is easy to depreciate such graphic periods as the outpourings of angry Protestant or rebellious Catholic pamphleteers. They are only too literally confirmed by other witnesses of whose loyalty there can be no question. Madame de Maintenon is as emphatic, though less fervid, in her attestation of the popular misery as Michel le Vassor or the Marquis de Guiscard. "The times are hard," we find her writing in August 1694, "and the misery of the people is great." "It would not be possible to imagine things worse than they are, and one can hardly believe to what a state of poverty the nobility has sunk."[2] Fénélon is another corroborative witness, and

[1] Mémoires du Marquis de Guiscard, Archives Curieuses, xi. 201.

[2] Conseils aux Demoiselles, i. 99.

the language of the preceptor of the Duke of Burgundy might have been borrowed from the "Soupirs de la France" or Guiscard's "Mémoires." The anonymous letter which he penned for the enlightenment and reproof of the king in 1694 or 1695 is, in style and matter, an extraordinary performance. It must have been difficult for an immaculate potentate to read his own character in the haughty, egotistic, jealous, despotic, spendthrift individual whom the writer, who at this period enjoyed the confidence of Madame de Maintenon, and had a patriotic and philanthropic interest in contemporary politics, not only portrays, but denounces. Fénélon doubtless counted on his ecclesiastical profession to excuse the liberty of plain speaking. He certainly strained his privilege to the utmost, and only the terrible reality of the situation can explain his Diogenes directness of speech. Louis' internal administration has been one long series of oppressions, because, while imagining that he has directed everything, he has committed affairs to men devoid of conscience or ability. His foreign policy, he asserts, has been a tissue of injustice towards foreign States, and has involved the systematic ruin of France. Ambition, rather than the welfare of the State, has been his guide, with the result that he has not only lost all his allies and incurred the odium and the hostility of Europe, but has forfeited the love of the people. Sedition within has become as formidable as hostility from without. Hunger, depopulation, black misery everywhere. "Your people . . . is perishing of hunger; the cultivation of the soil is almost wholly abandoned; the towns and the country are being depopulated; all the trades languish and afford little employment to the workmen; commerce is destroyed; . . . the whole of France is nothing but a vast hospital, desolate, without subsistence." His majesty must be converted, a second time, from the pride and greed of conquest, and this second regeneration can only be the fruit of humiliation. "God will humble you in order to convert you, for you will only become a Christian by humiliation. . . . Your religion consists only in superstitions, and in petty superficial practices." "Make peace," he exhorts, "and expiate by your shame all the glory which you have made your idol." This was to play the part of the candid Christian with a vengeance, and Fénélon deserves infinite credit for his honesty and his courage in an age of sycophant prelates, who see in Louis XIV. the representative of the Divine Majesty. The prudence of Madame de Maintenon, who herself did not escape his scathing eloquence, probably deprived her husband of the benefit of this epistolary sermon, and saved the writer from the Bastille. Madame was all

the more ready to do him this service inasmuch as she shared in the reaction against the policy of Louvois, and sympathised with the philanthropic politics of the Dukes of Beauvilliers and Chevreuse and other members of "the League of the public welfare."[1]

The failure of Louis' government could not be gainsaid. It stood condemned by the misery of the people, thus attested by a variety of observers, friendly as well as hostile. Where to find a remedy? Down with the king, cry the extremists. Be converted and rule justly, cries Fénélon. Such remedies were in the circumstances visionary. Revolution was premature, and therefore impossible. Conversion by humiliation was hopeless in the case of a man who might renounce his mistresses, but could not renounce himself. To men of a more practical and reflective type, like Boisguilbert and Vauban, the remedy lay in a radical reform of the fiscal and economic system. The people was miserable because it was governed on false principles, and from the philosophy of experience they evolved schemes of reform, which involve a revolution without a revolution, a radical change of the theory and practice of government by the medium of reason, not of force.

To Pierre de Boisguilbert belongs the merit of being the father of the modern science of political economy. He is the precursor of Quesnay, Turgot, and Adam Smith. He was born at Rouen in 1646, and in 1690 purchased the magisterial office of civil lieutenant-general of the bailieship of his native city. The prevailing misery led him to study its causes with passionate ardour, and to seek the true remedy. His mind was of that active and fertile cast which both analyses and constructs, and in pursuit of his task he wrote memoir on memoir to the controller-general, and solicited and obtained interviews for the propagation of his views. Pontchartrain took him for a visionary and a doctrinaire. "At first," said Boisguilbert, in begging a patient hearing in 1695, "you will take me for a fool; in a little you will perceive that what I have to say merits attention; finally you will be convinced of the truth of my system."

[1] This letter was first printed by D'Alembert, who asserted that it had been faithfully transcribed from the original manuscript written in the hand of Fénélon. Bausset, in his "Vie de Fénélon," discredited the assertion of D'Alembert, and denied the authenticity of the epistle (see i. 547, 548). His scepticism was disproved by the discovery in 1825 of the original manuscript by M. Renouard, who published it under the title of "Lettre de Fénélon à Louis XIV." It is included in the "Correspondance" of Fénélon, tom. xxvi. of his Œuvres. Its genuineness is no longer doubted. It seems very probable, however, that it was never handed to Louis, but remained in Fénélon's *portefeuille*. It is even doubtful whether it was shown to Madame de Maintenon.

Pontchartrain laughed, and curtly remarking that he would accept his interviewer's opinion of himself, turned his back upon him.[1] He was not more successful in advocating his cause in a subsequent interview with M. Chamillart in 1701, though he was more respectfully treated. Baulked in high quarters, he turned to the nation, and it is in the works that he wrote for and on behalf of the people that he expounded his economic theory. The "Détail de la France" appeared in 1695, the "Traité des Grains" in 1704, the "Dissertation sur les Richesses" in 1705, the "Factum de la France" in 1706.[2] Wealth, he insists, does not consist in money. The amount of silver and gold is not the true test of national prosperity. "It is not the quantity of silver and gold, which human corruption has set up as idols, that absolutely makes a man rich and opulent. . . . People have made divinities of these things, to which they have sacrificed and sacrifice every day more goods, and even human beings, than ever a blind antiquity immolated to its false gods." He was not the first to attack this idol worship, to refute the false doctrine from which it sprang, but he was the first to do so with a force and perspicacity which have earned for him the tardy title of the father of political economy. What, then, is money? "Money," replies Boisguilbert, "is nothing but a principle of wealth in those countries in which it is not a product of the soil. It is only the link of commerce, the guarantee of the future delivery of exchanges, where the delivery, by one of the contracting parties, does not take place on the spot." He forgets to add that money has a value in itself, apart from its employment as a medium of exchange, but with this reservation, his definition is sound. Money is mainly valuable as the nurse of production, labour, trade. "Wealth," he continues, "is nothing else than the power to procure the comfortable maintenance of life, in regard to both what is necessary and what is superfluous. And if wealth is merely the power to provide for one's wants, it follows that the soil is the first source of wealth. The soil, which people reckon the least valuable of goods, is the principal of all. There is not a profession, from the highest to the lowest, that does not depend for its subsistence and maintenance on the fruits of the earth. Hence the importance of agriculture, though he does not, like the Physiocrats of the school of Quesnay, fifty years later, go so far as to ignore the

[1] Mémoires du Duc de St Simon, ed. Chéruel et Regnier, v. 150; cf. Cadet, Pierre de Boisguilbert, 24.

[2] These works have been carefully analysed by M. Cadet in his excellent monograph on Boisguilbert. The "Detail" is printed in the Archives Curieuses, xii.

importance of commerce. Commerce, too, is a source of wealth. "The wealth of a country consists in its soil and its commerce." He recalls with evident sympathy the times when agriculture was held in fitting esteem, when ploughmen were senators, and shepherds were chosen as kings. To-day in France it is the despised, down-trodden peasant to whom is delegated the important commission of nurturing the vital force of the State, but who is regarded as merely the beast of burden of everybody else, of the government, clergy, nobility, the official hierarchy. It is shocking, but it is a fact, that an aristocratic prelate of the day is found addressing his rustic hearers as *canaille chretienne*—Christian rabble. Evidently this dandy in canonicals understood political economy as little as he did the spirit of the Gospel, and this ignorance was universal. The peasant was despised as "the dregs of the nation," his lot was the lot of the dog that every one might kick. The day was not yet in France when a noble lord could stoop to be interested in the plebeian question which was the best kind of manure to secure a good crop out of a bad field, yet on such questions depended the life of millions, even that of his precious aristocratic person. Boisguilbert is an exception to the rule, Vauban is another. They are the precursors of a new age when the destinction of being a friend of the people would not be regarded as the mark of a crazy brain.

Consumption, not money, is the grand condition of the wealth of a nation. "All the wealth in the world consists only in consumption." And consumption without free exchange is bound to be limited, because no producer can furnish all that he needs. "Wealth is at bottom only the continual interchange between man and man, trade and trade, province and province, kingdom and kingdom." The law of exchange consists in maintaining equilibrium, proportion between price and production, so that every one may have wherewith to live in comfort. If, for instance, twelve bushels of grain sell at twenty sous, and a pair of shoes at five sous, in the reign of Francis I., and the same quantity of grain fetches fifteen francs in the reign of Louis XIV., the shoemaker must receive a proportionate increase for the product of his labour, otherwise he will die of hunger, and society must go shoeless. The contravention of this law is the principal cause of the present misery. If a man's cellars are full of wine, if his barns are full of corn, and he cannot dispose of them at a saleable price, he must be in a miserable plight, because he is unable to supply his numerous other wants. The same holds good of the production of all other articles. Circulation is the only guarantee of universal prosperity, and in order to circulation there must be

proportion between price and labour. Hence the doctrine of a remunerative price. "The first intention of Nature is that men live comfortably from their labour, in a word, she has established the principle that each art should reward its master." The peasant, for instance, must be able to grow corn at a remunerative price. If not, he will either cease to grow it, or only grow a small quantity. A large quantity of land will consequently go out of cultivation, and the food supply of the nation suffer. This, unfortunately, is the condition of France, and it is due to the mistaken device of the government in arbitrarily lowering the price. It is an infatuated charity that resorts to such a revolution of the laws of nature. It takes away with one hand far more than it gives with the other. For there is such a thing as human solidarity. Professions, classes, even nations depend on each other. "The body of the State is like the human body, all the parts and members of which must contribute to the common maintenance, since the enfeeblement of one tends to the enfeeblement of all.

And what holds of the members of a single State towards each other, holds of the relation of one State towards another. No greater fallacy than that of M. Colbert, who proclaimed the exclusion of foreign manufactures and the ruin of Dutch commerce to be necessary to the prosperity of France. Nature, retorts Boisguilbert, knows neither different States nor different sovereigns. The profusion of one country is meant to supply the dearth of another. Reciprocity is the law of humanity. It follows that liberty, not restriction, is the nurse of prosperity. "Nature aspires only after liberty." Let the government, therefore, cease its mistaken system of control, regulation, tutelage. Protection, except for the maintenance of security, must go. The law of supply and demand stands in need of no artificial laws. Strike off, in particular, those shackles known as provincial or internal customs; reduce those which cramp our foreign trade; abolish the dues on exports. "These are the greatest enemies of the king and the kingdom France has ever had." Accordingly he gives no quarter to the prejudice of his time which, on the pretext of preventing famine or raising prices, keeps grain by artificial means out of the market and restricts its circulation. Reform, further, a fiscal system which makes production and consumption impossible by devouring the substance of the people. A system which keeps the people poor is as fatal to the State as to the people. "The owner of a carriage horse gives him the necessary nourishment in order to profit from his service. If not, he will certainly lose him and ruin himself. Let a prince act on the same

principle, and with an industrious people he will lack nothing; if he acts otherwise, he outrages religion, humanity, justice, policy, common-sense." Taxation must be proportionate to the capacity of the taxpayer, and there must be no privilege, no exemptions. "A monarch ought to act towards his people as God declares He will act towards Christians: He will demand much from those who own much, and little from those who have little." Away, therefore, with the contemptible prejudice that the assessment of the *taille* is a mark of subjection, as even Madame de Maintenon still teaches her pupils of St Cyr. Down with those vampires, the speculators and farmers of the taxes, who thrive on the misery of the people. Banish the abomination of extraordinary expedients for augmenting the revenue.

The elaboration of his economic views was at the same time a scathing exposure of the economic evils of the time. It is this that invests his writings with such a living interest and rare historic value. M. Michelet did not exaggerate when he wrote, "The great historian for the closing years of the seventeenth century is Le Pesant de Boisguilbert." His knowledge of history was not great, and it was easy for Forbonnais and Martin to decry his historical data as fanciful and inaccurate, but he displays the hideous misery of his own age with the brush of a master, and in his grasp of principles he is a far bigger man than a Colbert or a Sully. And though he preached to deaf ears, it is not too much to say that in the main he is a true prophet as well as a master historian of his time. He had to be content, like so many of the precursors of great movements, to be ignored, ridiculed, misunderstood, persecuted. He was deprived of his appointments, and exiled to the mountains of Auvergne, for reiterating truths unpalatable to the monarch. The whole fabric of government, he proclaims in effect, is rotten; it only perpetuates misery and oppression. It is necessary to blot out the artificial legislation of four centuries, and begin a new legislative period in accordance with the laws of nature, legislation for the reform of taxation, in favour of liberty of work, production, exchange, enterprise. In this sense he is not only the great historian of his time, he is the precursor of a revolution.

Like Boisguilbert, Vauban put on paper in his "Projet d'un Dixme Royale"[1] the results of his observations and reflections on the prevailing misery, but instead of appealing to the people, he wrote exclusively for the enlightenment of the government. As a soldier

[1] Written in 1698 or 1699, but not published till 1707. The copy I have consulted bears this date.

he sees in the authority of the king the only source of salutary action, and it is both as a patriot and a loyal subject that he appeals for a hearing. His numerous official journeys as commissary-general of fortifications revealed to him the appalling poverty of the people which he attributes to two causes, the long wars and a defective financial and economic system.[1] "The evil has reached an extremity, and if remedy be not applied, the common people will never be able to recover from this extreme of destitution. The high roads, the streets are full of beggars whom hunger and nakedness have driven from their homes." "The researches which I have made during several years have shown me that in these latter times almost a tenth of the people has been reduced to beggary and really lives by begging, and that of the nine other parts five are not in a condition to give alms to the one part, because they themselves are very nearly reduced to this miserable condition. Of the four others, three are hard pressed and embarrassed with debts and law-suits, and of the last tenth . . . you cannot count 10,000 families, nay, I do not think I misrepresent the truth when I say that there are not 10,000 which can be said to be in easy circumstances. Deducting the financiers and their allies, open and secret, those whom the king maintains by his largesses, a few merchants, etc., I am sure the remainder who could be said to be well off would form but a small number."[2]

Like Boisguilbert, Vauban manifests a profound sympathy with the people.[3] He emphasises the importance to the State of their welfare, and vindicates the peasant from the contempt of the higher classes. It is the people which lends the State its strength and its greatness, for on its labour and prosperity depends its power. "I feel myself obliged in honour and conscience," he remarks in simple yet eloquent language, "to represent to your majesty that it seems to me that at all times there has not been in France sufficient consideration for the common people, and that far too little thought has been given to its interests. It is the most ruined and miserable class in the kingdom; it is nevertheless the most important, both in virtue of its numbers and the real and effective services which it renders to the State. For it bears all the burdens, and always has suffered, and still suffers the most: it is on it that falls the penalty of the diminution of population. . . . It is certain that the greatness of kings is measured by the number of their subjects; it is herein that their welfare, their wealth, their strength, their fortune consists, yea, all

[1] Dixme Royale, 27, 28. [2] *Ibid.*, 4, 5.
[3] See Mémoires du Duc de St Simon, v. 149.

the consideration which they enjoy in this world."[1] Read and digest this, ye sycophant tribe who think that the age of Louis XIV. is measured by the pageantry of a showy court, by the ponderous splendour of Versailles, and the heroic achievements of a Turenne or a Luxemburg. After all, the hovel of the peasant is of more importance than all the Versailles and the Marlis that pride and extravagance can rear in self-glorification out of its poverty and misery. So, at least, opined a marshal of France, who looks at the reality and not at the mere show of human worth.

In his search for a remedy for this rampant misery, Vauban examines the effects of taxation in the past. These were, as we have seen often enough, of a tragic nature; and in his conclusion that the system of taxation was a source of corruption and oppression, Vauban undoubtedly read history correctly. The *tailles*, he insists, are fruitful of intolerable evils, and must be abandoned. "Not that they always are or have been excessive, but they are assessed without due proportion in regard both to parishes and individuals, in a word they have become arbitrary, and take no account of the capacity of the taxpayer to pay. They are, moreover, exacted with an extreme rigour, and with such enormous expense, that the charges of collection amount often to a quarter of the sum assessed. It is, besides, common often to carry the execution for payment to the length of putting up to auction the doors of the houses after selling everything inside."[2] Establish, he pleads, in place of this ruinous system, a *dîme royale*, a tax which shall be assessed proportionately on all incomes, whether derived from the soil or from any other source. Such a tax is the least susceptible of corruption, because it is subject only to its own tariff, and not to arbitrary assessment. The *taille* system is vicious, because it demands a certain sum from the taxpayer irrespective of his capacity to pay. The *dîme royale* would take from him only a part, proportionate to his income, and therefore fluctuating with his capacity. By the operation of this simple principle, Vauban believes that he has found the panacea for all the economic ills of the time. It would assure the king a sufficient revenue, it would enable the peasant to live in comfort, and banish starvation from the land. No more scope for speculators, for extraordinary expedients. No need of other sources of revenue except those which are legitimate and not in their nature oppressive and unjust, such as the customs, which must be relegated to the frontiers, the *gabelle*, which should be reduced by a half or two-thirds, and the royal domains. This was the "project" which he unfolded by the

[1] Dixme Royale, 18, 23. [2] *Ibid.*, 28, 29.

aid of logic and arithmetic in the hope of convincing the king and inaugurating a new period of national prosperity. He was not more successful than Boisguilbert, and his reward was similar. He committed the unpardonable sin of speaking too plainly of the popular misery. There was assuredly no flattery to the royal vanity in the fact of poverty and starvation which called for prompt reform and retrenchment, even with the recognition of the unlimited power of the sovereign to attest the loyalty of the writer. Louis, however, is told that he should be careful to use his power for the benefit of the people,[1] and it is evident from the tenor of his discourse that Vauban believes that he has failed to do so. A monarch who prided himself on his omniscience and his omnipotence did not take in good part the assumption that his government was practically a failure. Besides, Vauban made sworn foes of the pack of corrupt officials and mammon worshippers, who made vast fortunes out of the misery of the people. Such influences were too much for his logic and his arithmetic, and he was driven into retirement in disgrace, to die in a few months of a broken heart. Not a very heroic ending, certainly, of a marshal of France, who had indeed the courage of his opinions, but not the fortitude of the philosopher. "The unhappy marshal," says St Simon, "who lived in the hearts of all true Frenchmen, could not survive his disgrace at the hands of a master whom he had served with an intense devotion, and died a few months after, refusing to see anybody, consumed with sorrow and grief which nothing could assuage, and to which the king was insensible even to making it appear that he did not feel the loss of a servant so useful and so illustrious. He was not the less celebrated throughout the whole of Europe, even by his enemies, and not the less regretted in France by all who were not financiers or the puppets of financiers."[2]

His project did not die with him. It was applied three years later, but only, as we shall see, as an additional expedient to filch from the miserable taxpayer what little remained from the net of the fiscal snarer. It is remarkable as an honest, but in the circumstances visionary, attempt to reform chaos. The principles on which it was based were, however, a reform in themselves, if only a potential one. "It is incontestable," he rightly assumes as fundamental maxims, "that all the subjects of the State stand in need of protection, without which they could not subsist, that the sovereign cannot

[1] Dixme Royale, 230, 231.

[2] Mémoires de St Simon, v. 145. According to Dangeau, however, Louis was touched by his death.

give this protection if his subjects do not furnish him the means, and that a State cannot subsist unless the subjects sustain it. From this necessity it follows that all subjects are naturally bound to contribute to the State in proportion to their income or their industry, that it is sufficient to be a subject to authorise this obligation, and that every privilege which tends to exempt the subject from this contribution is an abuse and an injustice, and cannot and ought not to be allowed to the prejudice of the public."[1]

SOURCES OF THIS CHAPTER.—Isambert, Recueil, xx.; Legrelle, La Diplomatie Française et la Succession d'Espagne; Histoire de Louvois; Actes et Mémoires de la Paix de Ryswick; Grimblot, Letters of William III. and Louis XIV.; Voltaire, Siècle de Louis XIV.; Correspondance des Controleurs Généraux des Finances, publiée par A. M. de Boislisle; État de la France, par le Comte de Boulainvilliers; Histoire de Colbert; Cadet, Pierre de Boisguilbert; Clément, Histoire du Système Protecteur en France; Archives Curieuses, xi. and xii.; La Monarchie Universelle de Louis XIV. (Gregorio Leti); Salut de la France à M. le Dauphin; Lettre du Marquis de Guiscard à M. Chamillart, and Mémoires of the same in Archives Curieuses, second series, xi.; Lettres d'un Gentilhomme Français (Michel le Vassor); Soupirs de la France esclave qui aspire après la Liberté; Madame de Maintenon, Conseils aux Demoiselles; Correspondance de Fénélon in Œuvres, xxvi.; Bausset, Vie de Fénélon; Boisguilbert, Détail de la France in Archives Curieuses, xii.; Vauban, Projet d'un Dixme Royale; Mémoires de St Simon.

[1] Dixme Royale, 23, 24.

## CHAPTER XV.

### The Punishment and Passing of Louis XIV.—Failure of Absolute Monarchy (1700-1715)

IT was in this desperate condition of the body politic, which quacks like Pontchartrain were ruining and physicians of real skill were vainly offering to remedy, that the War of the Spanish Succession broke out. The question of the succession to the Spanish empire had, as we have seen, been more or less a practical question of international politics since Louis' *début* as active ruler, and had been the subject of more than one treaty. For fully thirty years the imbecile and moribund Charles II. had managed to cheat death and the cupidity of his kinsmen, Louis and Leopold, but it was becoming increasingly certain that he could not survive the century, and during the last years of its course every cabinet in Europe was weighing the chances that hung on his decease. It was the knowledge of the imminence of this event that hastened the conclusion of the Peace of Ryswick, and wrung from Louis the sacrifice of his conquests. Who was the rightful claimant to his vast inheritance? It might seem that the problem mainly concerned the people of Spain, though the interests of France and Austria, in the first place, and those of Holland and England, in a lesser degree, would be affected by the choice of a candidate. It was these interests, and not the voice of the people, that directed the solution of the problem. The voice of the people is a factor that hardly enters into the calculations of the diplomatist. Dynastic quarrels and antagonisms are the pivots on which the policy of Europe now turns, and will turn during a large part of the eighteeenth century. What the peoples think or suffer is a trivial matter compared with the glory of the dynasty. That the people of Spain should be allowed to choose a king whose acceptance of the crown would have been no menace to the balance of power and no outrage of the so-called claims of Louis and Leopold, was out of the question. The caprices of a royal spouse, the resentments of a royal mother, the jealousies of royal relatives, the personal ambition

of intriguing courtiers, the speculations of greedy potentates are of far more importance than the will and the well-being of a great nation. The nation shall take what it can get, and be thankful even if it be only the privilege of being slaughtered and pillaged because the potentates of Europe cannot agree which of them shall rob his neighbour with the greatest degree of impunity.

The claims, contentions, negotiations, intrigues, treaties connected with the scramble for a share in the spoil form a diplomatic labyrinth which appalled even M. Mignet.[1] Here is at least the key to it. Louis and Leopold had both Spanish blood in their veins, for both were the sons of Spanish mothers, of Anne of Austria and Maria, elder and younger daughters of Philip III. respectively. Both, too, had married a Spanish wife, Louis the elder, Maria Theresa, Leopold the younger, Margaret Theresa, daughters of Philip IV. and sisters of Charles II. The French king was thus a step nearer to the succession than the emperor, in virtue of the seniority both of his mother and his wife. Against this advantage Leopold could with reason object that both Anne of Austria and Maria Theresa had renounced, on their marriage, all right of succession to the throne of Spain, and that he was, therefore, the rightful heir. But, retorted Louis, the dowry of my spouse is still owing, and the validity of the renunciation depended on its payment. Moreover, that renunciation had never been recognised by the Cortes. The name of the Cortes has a novel sound on the lips of the most absolute of potentates, but anything for an argument, especially as there was a third claimant in the person of the Electoral Prince of Bavaria, who had, from the dynastic point of view, perhaps the best title of all. The electoral prince was the grand-nephew of Charles II., his mother being Leopold's daughter by the sister of the Spanish king. Louis, however, had the same pretext of priority to adduce against the claim of the elector on behalf of his son, and Leopold had a special argument ready to dash the pretension of a petty elector. He had taken care to extract from his daughter, on her marriage, the renunciation of any claim she might have to the succession to the Spanish crown, and now disqualified her son. But what of Leopold's right to dispose of a crown that is not his? That is a bagatelle of an objection to your dynastic politician, who would not hesitate to dispose of the universe if he had sufficient power and address to do so. Leopold, however, professes to be a magnanimous individual, and

[1] His Négociations relatives à la Succession d'Espagne sous Louis XIV. proceed no further than 1679. From the French point of view the Mémoires du Marquis de Torcy, the foreign minister during the period, are our chief guides.

will perform an act of grace for which the people of Spain shall bless him. He will renounce his claim in favour of a second son, by a second wife, the Archduke Charles. Louis, not to be outmatched in magnanimity, likewise waived his just rights in favour of the Dauphin.

In spite of this magnanimity there were still three competitors in the field, and the moribund King of Spain found it impossible to decide as to which he should die in favour of. Louis secretly resolved to help him out of his perplexity by deciding for him. As the grand potentate of potentates was he not entitled to act as general arbiter? In performing this function he took care not to neglect his own interests. He recurred to the idea of a partition of the Spanish dominions, and he succeeded in securing the co-operation of William III., whose support was an indispensable condition of the success of any such scheme. France, England, and Holland allied could dictate to Europe. The electoral prince, according to this arrangement, should have Spain and its colonies, while the Dauphin should have its Italian possessions except Milan, which was offered as a sop to the Archduke Charles. Louis would fain have laid hands on Belgium, but William had no liking for the nearer proximity of such a neighbour, and he was compelled to leave the Spanish Netherlands under the sceptre of the monarch of Spain (First Partition Treaty,[1] October 1698). Two flaws nullified the good intentions of Louis, who, while acting in his usual arbitrary fashion, was certainly desirous of maintaining peace, peace being indispensable to the recuperation of France. Leopold would not adhere to the treaty, nor would Charles II. appreciate the good intentions of his friends at Paris, London, and the Hague, who presumed to dispose of his crown without asking his leave. Charles responded to the indignation of the Spanish people by making a will declaring the electoral prince his sole heir. But death foiled this plan by carrying off the unfortunate prince. Louis and William thereupon rearranged the treaty of partition by substituting the Archduke Charles for the electoral prince, and increasing the share of the Dauphin by the addition of the Duchy of Lorraine and Bar, whose duke should be compensated by the Duchy of Milan (Second Partition Treaty,[2] May 1700). Charles II. was as indignant at this second act of prospective brigandage as at the first, but his indignation as well as that of his subjects was a matter of no importance if Leopold would be satisfied with this handsome increase of his share in the spoil. Leopold stickled for the Duchy of Milan,

[1] Mémoires de Torcy (Petitot, second series, tomes 67 and 68), i. 52, 53.
[2] *Ibid.*, i. 84.

and nothing would induce him to waive the annexation of this province to Austria. Charles, on his side, was violently agitated by the question as to who should have the sole benefit of his will, for the idea of partition was abhorrent to both king and people. He was pestered by the intrigues of a French party, led by Cardinal Carrero, and an Austrian party, championed by the Spanish queen, Maria de Neuburg. Unable to decide, he at last submitted the question to the Pope, Innocent XII. Innocent honestly tried to be as impartial as a Pope can be, and decided in favour of one of the sons of the Dauphin.[1] Accordingly, on the 2nd October 1700, Charles signed a final testament in favour of the Duke of Anjou, the Dauphin's second son, and a month later resigned himself to his melancholy fate.

On the 10th November Louis called a council at Fontainebleau to resolve the question whether he should accept the splendid inheritance on behalf of his grandson, or abide by the Second Partition Treaty. War was highly probable in any case, and the question really was with whom was it most advantageous to go to war? If Louis chose to break his own treaty, as M. de Torcy urged, he ran the risk of incurring the hostility of England and Holland, without gaining the goodwill of the emperor. If he abode by it, he must still fight Spain and the emperor, but the fight would be short and decisive. On the other hand, a struggle with the maritime powers would, as the Duke of Beauvilliers pointed out, probably ruin France. Louis paused to ruminate, and at length decided for acceptance.[2] "Monsieur," said he to the Duke of Anjou, in announcing his decision, "the King of Spain has made you a monarch; the nobles demand you, the people desire you, and I consent." A fortnight later he took leave of the new king with many characteristic advices. "Do not allow yourself to be governed. Be master, and have neither favourites nor prime minister. Consult your council, but decide yourself."[3]

"The Pyrenees exist no longer," was the courtly exclamation with which the Spanish ambassador greeted Philip V. in the audience chamber at Versailles on the 16th November. This, too, was the meaning which William III. read into this memorable consummation. There is no reason for believing that Louis had been playing false to his ally throughout these long negotiations. He had received a tempting offer, and he had accepted it as most conducive to the interests of his dynasty and what he believed to be the interests of

[1] Mémoires de Torcy, i. 89, 90. [2] *Ibid.*, i. 95-100.
[3] Mém. Hist., ii. 460-466.

peace. Yet William had reason to complain that he had broken faith with him, and put little trust in the assurances with which he sought to convince him that the accession of his grandson to the throne of Spain, in preference to the partition of the Spanish empire for the aggrandisement of France, was a proof of his moderation and his anxiety to preserve the peace. He saw in it the fruit of deception and intrigue, and though he did not read French diplomacy correctly,[1] he had cause to be concerned at the possible consequences of the unexpected turn of events. What if Philip V. should see fit to surrender Belgium to his grandfather, or Louis should confirm Philip's right of succession to the French crown? The possible consequences to the interests of England and Holland might be serious enough. The Dutch States-General shared his apprehensions, and though the Tory majority of the English Parliament was strongly averse to war, and had compelled him to reduce the English army, events rapidly confirmed his fears and made a general war unavoidable. If Louis had been prudent he might have limited the struggle to a short and decisive conflict with Leopold, who could not bring himself to recognise the will of Charles as valid, and was resolved to dispute it sword in hand. Unhappily he was neither prudent nor conciliatory, and proceeded to act as if the Pyrenees really no longer existed. In defiance of a stipulation in the testament of Charles that Philip should renounce his right to the throne of France, he expressly conserved these rights by letters patent, of date December 1700.[2] Though there was not much chance that the two crowns would ever be united in the person of Philip and his descendants, the declaration emphasised the fact that Louis could not be trusted to observe moderation. Worse still, he repeated the tactics of 1667, and suddenly seized the barrier fortresses of the Spanish Netherlands and expelled their Dutch garrisons.[3] The pretext for this gross violation of the Treaty of Ryswick was the hostile attitude of the States-General, whose resentment and suspicions had led them to increase their armaments. Negotiation only tended to increase the mutual irritation, though both England and Holland recognised Philip V. Hostilities had already broken out in North Italy between Louis and Leopold, for whom Prince Eugene won the battles of Carpi and Chiari,[4] and to whom the Maritime Powers promised their

[1] The diplomatic correspondence proves that Louis intended to stick to partition before the unexpected decision of Charles II.

[2] Isambert, xx. 375-377.

[3] Mémoires de St Simon, ii. 431-433.

[4] Mémoires de Torcy, i. 101, 102.

support (Grand Alliance signed at the Hague, 7th September 1701). Negotiation might still have found in the pacific disposition of the Tories an effectual means of counteracting the bellicose humour of William and his Dutch countrymen, had not Louis infuriated the English people by one of those high-handed acts by which he gratuitously insulted and provoked foreign nations. Three days after the signature of this secret treaty, James II. died at St Germain, and Louis, listening to the importunities of his widow, recognised the title of his son as King of England. The insensate act was not merely an additional contravention of the Treaty of Ryswick, it was a thrust at the *amour propre* of a people which was as resolute to resent as it was sensitive to feel any assumption of the right of foreign dictation. The English people had not hesitated to withdraw its allegiance from its sovereign in defence of its laws, and here was an overweening foreign potentate "pretending to the right of giving it a king," to use the words of the foreign minister of that potentate.[1] Louis might hector the Pope, might play the master towards a Doge of Genoa. He was now to find that he might try this sort of thing once too often. A new Parliament, in which the Whigs predominated, unanimously voted a large naval and military force to chastise the presumptuous meddler. William did not live to declare war or to direct it. A fall from his horse on the 4th March 1702 was followed by his death a fortnight later. On the 14th May his successor, Anne, forcibly espoused the cause of his allies.[2]

Louis was ill prepared for the struggle, even with the alliance of Spain, the Electors of Bavaria and Cologne, the Duke of Savoy, and the King of Portugal.[3] France had not had time to recover from the drain of a ten years' war, and Chamillart, Pontchartrain's successor, was not the man to revive, by an enlightened administration, the universal blight of the national prosperity. He was the best billiard player in France, and this was the most notable thing that could be said of his ability. His skill in the game, of which Louis was passionately fond, made his fortune, but neither he himself nor his friends could discover any qualification for the post of controller-general. He was the most obliging and good-hearted of men, and on this account alone was utterly unfit to take charge of the national

[1] Mémoires de Torcy, i. 103: "Tous les Anglais unanimement regardoient comme une offense mortelle de la part de la France qu'elle pretendit s'attribuer le droit de leur donner un roi au prejudice de celui qu'ils avoient eux-mêmes appelé et reconnu depuis plusieurs années."

[2] For declaration of war see Dumont, Corps Diplomatique, viii. 115.

[3] Mémoires de Torcy, i. 100, 101.

purse.[1] Louis had confidence in his own discrimination, in spite of Chamillart's protestations of his own incapacity. "I have formed your father, and I shall form you likewise." He was almost the only great man left of his reign. The generals who had made the past resplendent with victory, the ministers who had successfully toiled in the cabinet, had disappeared, and, with one or two exceptions, had left only mediocrity behind. In filling their places Louis mistook the favourites of Madame de Maintenon for men of genius. Madame, as we have seen, was not intellectually a strong woman, but she exercised great influence over her husband, and practised a prudent deference that never failed of its effect. The king and his ministers deliberated and worked in her presence, while she sat apparently absorbed in her knitting, but with ears open, and a mind busy noting and devising in silence. The Grand Monarch was the creature of this observant, deferential woman, as much as of his own self-consciousness. He believed implicitly in Madame, and Madame believed implicitly in herself. The intriguing, sycophant devotees who succeeded in gaining her ear speedily found their way to high commands and administrative offices. Chamillart, for instance, had been one of her most assiduous courtiers, and Chamillart erelong conjoined the post of war minister with that of controller. If he was a poor substitute for Colbert, he was a still poorer substitute for Louvois, who, though a detestable politician, was a most able organiser. The younger and more inexperienced the better, since Louis had grown ever more jealous of merit, and believed he could create it. If he should claim the power to form generals and ministers out of the dolls of his great-grandchildren, the fact would be indisputable. "The choice of the king was not always approved, but it was always applauded," remarks a contemporary recorder.[2] The incapacity of his ministers and generals during the last fifteen years of his reign became proverbial. Louis, expressing his astonishment one day at the stupidity of a certain ambassador, was ironically answered by the Duke of Grammont, "You will find, sire, that he is a relative of one of your ministers."[3] Villeroi, one of Madame's *protegés*, was sent to replace Catinat in Italy, and became the butt of the ridicule of his own soldiers as well as of the enemy. Another favourite, the Duke of Feuillade, Chamillart's son-in-law, was placed in a position which enabled him to lose the battle of Turin. In spite of the royal

[1] For the character of Chamillart see Mémoires de St Simon, ii. 230-236.

[2] Duclos, Mémoires Secrets sur le Règne de Louis XIV. (Bibliothèque des Mémoires, par Barrière), p. 22.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 24.

sagacity, it was soon evident that a Villeroi, a Feuillade, a Marsin, a Tallard, even a Vendôme or a Villars were no match for a Marlborough and a Eugene. "If your master had many such soldiers as you," said Marlborough to a brave French prisoner on the field of Blenheim, "he would be invincible." "It is not soldiers like me, it is generals like you he stands in need of," was the reply.[1] The operations of his armies, which were composed of weak and insufficiently officered regiments, were directed from Versailles. To execute some grand operation it was necessary to consult the oracle in Madame de Maintenon's boudoir, at the price of losing opportunity and carrying out orders in a mechanical spirit.[2] Genius and ardour had exhausted themselves in the conflicts of forty years, and with the old age of Louis everything had grown old, except experience.

The opening campaigns[3] of 1702 and 1703 were still creditable, with the exception of the capture of Villeroi by Eugene at Cremona (February 1702). The alliance of Bavaria exposed south-eastern Germany to a French invasion and threatened Vienna, which was further endangered by a Hungarian insurrection. The dashing enterprise of Marlborough, and the want of enterprise on the part of the Elector, who failed to push his advantage against the emperor, lost to Louis the fruit of his incipient successes. The decisive defeat which Marlborough and Eugene inflicted on Tallard and Marsin at Blenheim, or Hochstedt, in August 1704, was followed by the flight of the Elector and the French army across the Rhine. It was now the turn of the allies to carry the war into the territory of their enemy, and though fortune was less adverse in Italy, where Vendôme enlarged his conquests at the expense of the Duke of Savoy, who, along with the King of Portugal, changed sides, the war was for Louis, henceforth, a war mainly of defence. The capture of Gibraltar by Rooke, which exposed Spain itself to invasion, was followed by that of Barcelona in 1705, and the revolution of Catalonia and Aragon, which declared for the Archduke, under the title of Charles III. Philip V. was forced to retire from Madrid before the advance of an Anglo-Portuguese force, which proclaimed Charles III. in the capital of Spain. The flight of Philip was but one of many disasters that darkened the star of Louis during the campaign of 1706. Marlborough's victory over Villeroi at Ramillies resulted in the conquest of the greater part of Belgium, whilst Eugene over-

[1] Duclos, p. 24. [2] Voltaire, Siècle, 220-222.

[3] For a detailed account of the operations see Mémoires Militaires relatifs à la Succession d'Espagne sous Louis XIV., edited for the Documents Inédits by Lieut.-Gen. Pelet, 11 vols.

ran Lombardy, raised the siege of Turin, and drove the French out of Piedmont. The sudden change of fortune in Spain in favour of Philip, who returned to Madrid, and, with the aid of the Duke of Berwick, recovered Castille in the autumn, afforded some compensation for the crushing series of disasters in Italy and the Netherlands. Louis began the campaign of 1707 with the hope of at least checking the advance of the allies into France and maintaining the offensive in Spain. The results seemed to justify this hope. Berwick consolidated the power of Philip by the victory of Almanza. Eugene failed in the attempt to seize Toulon, penetrate Languedoc, and rouse the Cevennes, and was compelled to retreat to Nice. Villeroi pushed across the Rhine, advanced to the Upper Danube and exacted on German territory compensation for the pillage of Provence. Stanhope, however, seized Minorca, and Marlborough, who had remained inactive during this campaign, checked the slight flow of the tide in favour of Louis, by the victory of Oudenarde in the following year. Vendôme and the Duke of Burgundy quarrelled over the question as to who was most to blame for this disaster, and looked on in impotent disunion while Eugene besieged and captured Lille. The advance of a force of Dutch cavalry as far as the environs of Paris filled the capital with consternation. Famine added its terrors to the rage and fear of the people. The terrible winter of 1708-9 was more disastrous than the most ruinous campaign. Nature proved a more implacable enemy to France than the Grand Alliance. Death was reaping a grim harvest in the homes of the poor as well as on the battlefield. The frost destroyed all vegetable life and carried off the starving masses by the thousand. The want of subsistence made itself felt in the mansion as well as in the hut. The hospitals were glutted with the sick and dying of all classes.[1] Riots in the market halls, violent placards, outspoken denunciations of Louis and his ministers, gave vent to the fury of the populace.[2] The spectre of bankruptcy intensified the universal horror and melancholy of the situation. "There seemed to be not a sou left in the kingdom," says St Simon. "Nobody was able to pay. . . . The country people, harassed by exaction and poverty, were insolvent. Commerce was almost extinct, good faith and confidence banished. There was no resource for the king but terror and the exercise of an unlimited power, which, absolute though he was, likewise failed him for lack of anything to take. Circulation was destroyed, and no means of re-establishing it. The king could not pay his troops,

[1] See the graphic description of St Simon (Mémoires, vi. 310-317).

[2] Mémoires de St Simon, vi. 407, 408; Journal de Dangeau, ii. 330, 331.

although no one could imagine what had become of the millions which had found their way into his coffers."[1]

Chamillart had recourse to one violent expedient after another, after trying every device known to his predecessor to keep the patient in agony, without killing him outright. He renewed and increased the capitation tax,[2] he multiplied and sold offices[3] with an ingenuity worthy of a schoolman of the Middle Ages, he issued stock at ruinous interest,[4] and established State lotteries,[5] he tampered with the coinage[6] by renewing it at forced value, and issued paper money[7] (*billets de monnaie*) far in excess of the ability to repay in coin. The suspension of payments by the Caisse d'Emprunts for six months, from September 1704, staggered the State creditors, and made further loans impossible except at exorbitant interest. The interest was raised to ten per cent.[8] in order to reassure the stockholders, who, nevertheless, nervously demanded payment. The controller tried to extricate himself from this embarrassment by paying half in coin and half in notes, and ordained that the notes should also be used in private transactions to the extent of one-fourth. He converted fifty millions worth of them into promissory notes at five per cent., and undertook to lay aside six millions annually to reimburse the rest in circulation. Lay aside six millions per annum, when every sou of available revenue was being swallowed in the war vortex! Nobody was deceived by these subterfuges for lending an artificial value to the controller's paper substitute for hard cash. The notes, converted and unconverted, fell lower and lower, the speculators accelerated by their denunciations the process of deterioration, in order to buy them up at from sixty to eighty per cent. loss to the owner. The straits of the finance minister was the opportunity of the financiers; the war was not merely disastrous to the armies of Louis, it afforded a swarm of contractors and speculators a chance of pillaging the nation. They profited enormously, too, from the depreciation of the coinage, for while they would only accept remittances at the former standard, they paid at current value and pocketed the difference. The controller next tried to save the credit of the State and its paper money by extending its circulation, hitherto confined to Paris, to the whole kingdom,[9] and restricting the amount of that circulation to 122 millions of livres, out of 413 millions issued, with permission to the owners of the surplus to

[1] Mémoires de St Simon, vi. 347.
[2] See Isambert, xx. 381.
[3] Isambert, xx. 485, and countless similar edicts.
[4] *Ibid.*, xx. 412, etc.
[5] *Ibid.*, xx. 356, 481.
[6] *Ibid.*, xx. 385.
[7] *Ibid.*, xx. 519.
[8] *Ibid.*, xx. 462 (March 1705).
[9] *Ibid.*, xx. 514 (April 1707).

convert their notes into claims on the product of the revenue derived from the receivers and farmers general. Another sign of the desperate straits to which he was reduced, was the issue of twenty-sou pieces which were only worth twelve. The currency was further vitiated by false coin secretly manufactured by the higher nobility, especially in Provence. Smuggling was the device to which the high price of provisions, or the arrears of pay drove others. Armed bands roved about Normandy, Picardy, Anjou, and other provinces, seizing the salt stored in the royal depôts, and selling it to the highest bidder.[1] With the utmost ingenuity Chamillart could only make up 20 millions wherewith to face the expenses of a new campaign estimated at 203 millions.[2] Bewildered by the utter chaos of affairs and harassed into ill-health by the anxieties of seven years of incessant and hopeless empiricism, he lost heart and vacated his post in favour of Desmaretz, Colbert's nephew, in the beginning of 1708. "I shall be obliged to you," said Louis to the new controller-general, "if you can find a remedy, and I shall not be at all surprised if things continue to go from bad to worse."[3]

Great hopes were built on M. Desmaretz, but what could the most sanguine new-comer, even with the blood of Colbert in his veins, achieve with only 20 millions to meet the drain of 203 millions, and credit submerged beneath a load of debt and anticipations. Up to this stage the war had cost 1,346 millions of livres, of which the ordinary revenue had furnished less than a third. What to try next was a hopeless enough problem. True, Louis, as sovereign owner of France, might take the miserable peasant's last sou, but he might as well put France up to auction. By dint of anticipations, new taxes, forced loans, creation of offices, doubling the provincial customs, at terrible cost to commerce and agriculture, Desmaretz struggled through the year to find himself face to face with the frost and famine of the winter of 1708-9. Louis even descended to the device of promenading the banker Samuel Bernard, the Crœsus of the day, through the grounds of Marly, and enchanting by this flattering condescension a large loan for the needy controller-general.[4] It was a sad descent for the dictator of Europe to have to pat a vulgar and vain financier on the back in order to save himself from bankruptcy. "I was astonished," says St Simon, an eye-witness of the strange scene, "at this kind of prostitution of the king (Desmaretz had arranged the affair), so sparing of his words, loading a man of this stamp with flatteries and attentions. I was not

[1] Bailly, Histoire Financière, ii. 23.
[2] *Ibid.*, ii. 24.
[3] Mémoires de St Simon, v. 390.
[4] *Ibid.*, v. 458, 459.

long in learning the cause, and I could not help wondering to what expedients the greatest of kings are sometimes reduced."

How Desmaretz got through this tragic winter, and the tragic summer of dearth that ensued, is a mystery. To the taxes in support of the war was added a tax to keep the body and soul of the starving peasantry together.[1] It was necessary to import grain to keep the people alive, as well as feed the troops at the frontiers. The controller-general, on his own confession, was reduced to the expedient of waiting for a miracle. The miracle came in the shape of the arrival of a fleet from Spanish America with specie to the value of thirty million livres. Louis added to this nucleus by sending his plate to the mint.[2] The courtiers followed his example, and Madame de Maintenon took to feeding on oat cake. Oat cake at Versailles meant herbs and roots and stark want in the hut of the peasant. Oat cake and starvation, it was evident, could not save France. Louis, therefore, braced himself to the duty of sacrificing his pride and ambition to the misery of the people. It is to his credit that he yielded to duty rather than to discouragement. It is only fair to say that he bore himself in public like a strong man,[3] under the succession of blows which prostrated his pride in the dust, and taught him the folly and vanity of presumptuous arrogance. He was one of those self-intoxicated and opinionated natures to whom docility is the hardest of lessons, but defeat, bankruptcy, famine, universal collapse, are invincible teachers, and though he maintained his dignity and self-possession in public, he bent in secret before the consciousness of punishment and the stern force of necessity. He had steered the ship of State towards the breakers, and though he stood bravely at the helm, he was fain to confess the necessity of tacking in the face of certain shipwreck. He realised at last, as he had so often professed in word, that his first duty was to the people, not to himself.[4] After paving the way by preliminary negotiations, he sent M. de Torcy, minister for foreign affairs, to the

[1] Isambert, xx. 541.

[2] Mémoires de St Simon, vi. 411-415. The correspondence of Madame de Maintenon during this period, particularly with Madame des Ursins, the adviser of Philip V., confirm St Simon's details of the extremity to which Louis was reduced.

[3] "Le roi soutenoit avec fermeté tant d'événemens si differens du bonheur dont ses armes etoient autrefois accompagnés" (Méms. de Torcy, i. 107, 108).

[4] "Quoique son courage parût à toute épreuve, il sentoit intérieurement la juste douleur qui lui causoit la prolongation d'une guerre dont le poids accabloit ses sujets. Plus touché de leurs maux que de sa propre gloire il avoit employé pour les terminer differens moyens d'entamer une négociation" (*Ibid.*, i. 109).

Hague to offer the abandonment of the cause of Philip V. in favour of his rival, reserving only Naples as compensation to his grandson, the guarantee of an ample barrier to the Dutch in the Spanish Netherlands, the surrender of Strasburg and the renewal of the ratification of the Treaty of Westphalia to the empire, and the demolition of the fortifications of Dunkirk and the withdrawal of his protection from the Pretender to Great Britain.[1] He was ready to pay a large sum to Marlborough[2] in order to secure by his aid the compliance of the allies with this generous proposal. Almost anything for peace, is the tenor of M. Torcy's instructions. Both his offers were rejected. The allies would be satisfied with nothing less than the renunciation by Philip V. of the whole Spanish empire, in favour of the archduke, and the cession by Louis of the greater part of his conquests since 1668. Nay, if Philip should refuse to demit his throne, Louis must co-operate with the allies to compel compliance.[3] Rather than submit, he determined to risk the chances of another campaign, and appealed to the nation "to rescue the glory and security of France."[4] It was a far more honourable, if still disagreeable thing to do, than to fawn on a plutocrat like Samuel Bernard. Louis had posed as the State, and now he must turn to the nation and say in effect: "You are, after all, the State; I have ruined it by my presumption; you must repair it by your patriotism. Help yourselves; the only true government is self-government. Bossuet is a fool like me. I am after all no demigod. It is your power, not mine, that can lift us out of the abyss." The nation nobly responded. "La France," says M. Michelet, "par moments, a de nobles réveils."[5] Louis was able to place a larger army, under Villars, in the field than ever before. This was perhaps the only occasion on which he was absolutely in the right as against his foes. There was ample room for compromise and adjustment in the terms he had offered, and Marlborough, Heinsius, and the Emperor Joseph, who had succeeded Leopold in 1705, put themselves in the wrong by responding with an impossible ultimatum. Events at any rate seemed in the meantime to justify their implacable firmness. Villars hazarded, and lost the battle of Malplaquet—the bloodiest of the whole war—though he lost it with infinite honour to the desperate bravery of troops fighting against superior numbers. To raise and maintain another army after the carnage of Malplaquet seemed impossible, and Louis again humiliated himself to offer or accept almost any terms. His plenipotentiaries again crossed the Dutch frontier to promise at the Conferences

[1] Méms. de Torcy, i. 200-208. [2] *Ibid.*, i. 133. [3] *Ibid.*, i. 304-326.
[4] Méms. Hist., ii. 469-471. [5] Hist. de France, xvi. 113.

of Gertruydenberg a subsidy of one million livres per month to assist the allies to compel Philip's renunciation of the Spanish throne and the concession of Alsace to the emperor, in addition to his previous offer (June 1710).[1] "The will of the allies," was the response of Heinsius and his fellow plenipotentiaries, "is that the king take upon himself . . . to compel the King of Spain, by his own sole efforts, to renounce the whole Spanish monarchy."[2] This was too much to ask, even on the strength of a long series of victories. The allies—little Holland, with no small conceit of its dictatorial dignity, in the van—had become as arrogant and overbearing as Louis himself in the plenitude of his power. They were not satisfied with humiliating and reducing him to impotence; they were determined to make him the instrument as well as the object of their revenge, and they overreached themselves. In England the war party was about to play out its *rôle* by the fall of Godolphin and the Whigs, and the advent of Harley, Bolingbroke, and the Tories to power. In Spain, after Charles, as the result of an Anglo-Austrian victory at Saragossa, had again entered Madrid in the summer of 1710, Vendôme gained the battle of Villa Viciosa against Stahremberg, compelled Stanhope to surrender at Brihuega, and rendered Philip V. indisputable master of the Spanish Peninsula. The death of the Emperor Joseph, without issue, in 1711, placed the imperial crown on the head of the Archduke Charles, and made the prosecution of his claim to that of Spain henceforth inadmissible. The union of Spain and Austria would have been as dangerous to the balance of power as the union of Spain and France. By this congeries of favourable events Marlborough lost his supremacy in Britain, and Heinsius in Holland. The new British ministry was, moreover, the inveterate foe of the great Churchill, and its party hatreds as much as its policy inclined it to peace. Harley and Bolingbroke accordingly opened secret negotiations in 1711,[3] deposed Marlborough from his command, which was given to the Duke of Ormond, agreed to the cessation of hostilities by sea and land,[4] left Eugene, who was defeated by Villars at Denain, to continue the struggle single-handed, and the Dutch no alternative but to accept the terms arranged with Louis, and finally signed the Treaty of Utrecht. Their crooked diplomacy was rewarded by the acquisition of Gibraltar and Port Mahon, a part of the North American colonies of France (Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, and Hudson's Bay), the demolition of the fortifications of Dunkirk, the guarantee of the sole right of importing

[1] Méms. de Torcy, i. 410, 411.
[2] *Ibid.*, i. 418.
[3] *Ibid.*, ii. 18 *et seq.*
[4] *Ibid.*, ii. 184.

slaves into Spanish America, and of sending annually a trading vessel to Panama, the expulsion of the Pretender from France, the cession of a defensive frontier to Holland on the side of France and Belgium, and the cession of Sicily to the Duke of Savoy, with the title of king (Treaty of Utrecht,[1] April 1713). In return they recognised Philip V. as King of Spain and its colonies. Its Italian possessions and Belgium were reserved as the share of the emperor, who, after unsuccessfully protracting the struggle into an additional campaign, in which Eugene lost some of his laurels, was forced to accept his share of the spoil as a present from the King of France (Treaty of Rastatt, March 1714).

For none of the contending parties were these treaties, all things considered, more favourable than for Louis, and M. Torcy had ample reason, on comparing the disasters to French arms with the result of French diplomacy, to be satisfied with the fruit of his labours.[2] After offering, under the pressure of misfortune, to partially dismember his kingdom, Louis preserved his conquests in Europe almost intact, and, if forced to propitiate Great Britain with a slice of his colonies, survived to see his grandson in peaceful possession of the crown of Spain. A closer survey reveals the fact, that if he maintained French territory intact, he had undermined the power of France, and started Britain on the career of colonial expansion, which was only to end with the destruction of that of her rival in America and India. Bankruptcy, and a debt of two milliards—the significance of this for both present and future is evident, and if France continued to be governed on principles which produced such results, the ultimate end, sooner or later, is also becoming more and more evident. Absolute government, with its financial empiricism, its fatuous foreign policies, can hardly count on Providence a second time to drag it out of chaos, and restore animation to a people at the last gasp. Only a radical change of treatment can infuse vigour into the body politic, and under Desmaretz's auspices, the faith in violent quack remedies in the domain of finance was unabated. If Desmaretz did not kill the poor patient outright and bury him underneath a load of anticipations and debts, it was because he could not by his edicts quite obliterate the unwritten edicts, by which nations are preserved for future ends. He certainly did his best to cheat Providence. He bethought him of Vauban's project, and decreed an income tax[3] on all and sundry,

[1] See Dumont, Corps Diplomatique, viii. 339 *et seq.*

[2] Mémoires, ii. 225-227.

[3] Isambert, xx. 558 and 562 (October and December 1710).

privileged and non-privileged alike, who had any income left, in addition to all the fiscal exactions and oppressions which the *dîme royale* of Vauban was meant merely to replace. The application of Vauban's scheme involved, therefore, only additional pillage and misery. Louis had some scruples about so extreme an expedient, but he was reassured by Père Le Tellier and the resourceful doctors of the Sorbonne, who, according to St Simon, told him that, as king, he was owner of the whole kingdom and was only taking his own, however much he might take.[1] This act of pillage was one more stab to prosperity and public credit, which was further bled by forced reductions of *rentes*, forced loans, forced diminutions of the enormous mass of paper money in circulation. The State was without a revenue, and only existed on anticipation of the future. A large part of France had become a desert,[2] the peasant having neither capital nor stock, neither implements to till the soil, nor seed to sow it with, often hardly a roof to shelter his family. Industry and commerce were ruined. Mendicity assumed appalling proportions, and the swarm of beggars on every highway was a mournful illustration of the misery and desolation that darkened the closing years of a reign, whose springtide of promise had long changed into the autumn of storm, disaster, and decay.

It is certain that Louis had by this time forfeited the love of the great mass of his subjects. Public opinion was muzzled by the police, but the utmost rigour of the police could not prevent the publication of pamphlets and placards in which the names of the king and Madame de Maintenon were execrated or ridiculed. The conviction was steadily growing, these last twenty-five years, that absolute government was incompatible with the interests of the nation, and the demand for the States-General which had found expression as early as 1690 in the "Soupirs de la France," was now the demand of critics of his government, who could not be accused of revolutionary violence or of hostility to his person. It was the demand of so staunch a royalist and champion of aristocratic privilege as Fénélon, who, though a political philanthropist, was no democrat. Fénélon, economist, philosopher, reformer, and churchman in one, belonged to the reform party of the Dukes of Beauvilliers and Chevreuse, and was the mentor of his old pupil, the Duke of Burgundy, the Dauphin's eldest son and heir. He was a conservative rather than a progressive reformer, and his idea was substantially the revival of the old system of aristocratic rule which had declined

[1] Mémoires de St Simon, viii. 137, 138.
[2] Bailly, Histoire Financière, ii. 38.

with the growth of absolute monarchy, with certain special reforms, applicable to the time, engrafted on it. Decentralisation is his remedy, but it is decentralisation on aristocratic, not on democratic principles. Local government, under aristocratic patronage, by the extension of the system of the provincial assemblies of the *pays d'état* to the whole kingdom, periodic convocations of the States-General in which the aristocratic element should predominate, suppression of the intendants and substitution of the Council of State and six subordinate councils for the ministers in the conduct of administration, liberty of commerce and the encouragement of arts and manufactures by the establishment of a Council of Commerce, reform of the judicature by the abolition of hereditary purchase and the diminution of the number of judges, retrenchment of expenditure by the moderation of the royal magnificence and the reduction of the number of court appointments, which should henceforth be reserved for the nobility, reform of fiscal abuses by the suppression of the *gabelle*, the capitation tax, the *dîme royale*, and the transactions of financiers—such are the leading features of Fénélon's scheme of reaction and reform.[1] The reaction would probably have been too great a price to pay for the reform in view of the abuses inherent in the system of feudal privilege and oppression, which every enlightened reformer in France had denounced for centuries, and from which the monarchy had partially delivered the kingdom. As it was, the scheme was deprived of the chance of experiment by a series of bereavements which carried off the Duke of Burgundy, the people's hope of a new era of good government,[2] and almost decimated the inner circle of the royal family. On the 11th April 1711, the Dauphin succumbed to smallpox. On the 12th February 1712, the Duchess of Burgundy fell a victim to fever. A week later, her husband, the heir-presumptive, expired of the same malady, their eldest son three weeks later. The life of their second son, the Duke of Anjou, and the future Louis XV., was for some time in the greatest danger. Father and mother were borne to their tomb at St Denis on the same funeral car, amid the terrible grief of the afflicted monarch and the tears of a nation which saw its aspirations after future reform blighted as it were overnight.[3] Suspicion accused the Duke of Orleans of seeking to assure himself a crown by a succession of terrible crimes. The duke amused himself with the study of

[1] See Plans de Gouvernement proposés au Duc de Bourgoyne, November 1711, Œuvres de Fénélon, xxii. 575-595; cf. Mémoires submitted to the Dukes of Beauvilliers and Chevreuse, *ibid.*, 465-571.

[2] See St Simon, Mémoires, ix. 228.

[3] For this series of crushing calamities, see Mémoires de St Simon, viii. and ix.

alchemy, and had made brave efforts to embody the devil. Had he not used his knowledge of the secret arts in the service of his ambition as well as in the gratification of his curiosity? There could be no explanation of the duke's studies, in the popular estimation, except a sinister one, especially as two of the royal physicians were positive in attributing the fatal fever to poison. Two others as stoutly denied the agency of poison. "There goes the murderer," cried the populace, as the duke passed in the funeral procession of his cousin. Orleans indignantly rebutted the accusation, and offered to become a prisoner in the Bastille till his innocence was established. Louis and Madame de Maintenon, with whom the duke was no favourite, were inclined to doubt his protestations, but they hesitated to expose the royal family to the scandal of a public investigation, and the charge remained a silly suspicion.[1] The fact that the Duke of Anjou survived to become Louis XV., under the regency of Orleans, is a sufficient presumption of the innocence of the unpopular alchemist.

The unpopularity of Louis' nephew contributed to the advancement of his natural children, the Duke of Maine and the Count of Toulouse. Madame de Maintenon took advantage of the disgrace of Orleans, whom she did her utmost to discredit, and who neglected to earn for himself the dominant odour of hypocrisy, to wheedle out of her husband the full legitimation, as princes of the blood, of her old wards, whose interests she fostered with the affection of a mother. To the horror of St Simon[2] and other lawfully born dukes, he published an edict[3] declaring them capable of succession to the throne after all other princes of the blood. There was some cause for the indignation and consternation of St Simon and other lawfully born persons of high rank. There was still more cause on the part of the nation at the arbitrariness of an act which assumed its slavery and nullity. To dispose arbitrarily of the right to inherit the crown in favour of the fruit of a double adultery, was to assume the right to trample upon both the moral law and the laws of France. In exercising this right Louis was carrying the doctrine of the ownership of the State to a point which degraded both himself and the State. The arrogance, which decreed, is only equalled by the slavery, which submitted, to this arbitrary proceeding. To realise what a race of slaves is that sycophant crowd of highly titled lords and ladies that press and jostle for the smile of the great autocrat, it is only necessary to watch that strange creature St Simon fawning

[1] Mémoires de St Simon, ix. 246-274.
[2] *Ibid.*, x. 213, 214.
[3] Isambert, xx. 619-623 (July 1714).

compliments on the Duke of Maine as fully fledged prince of the blood, and then retiring to his study to give vent to his wrath and his vexation. The slave at court became the most bitter of critics when he retired to swear at large behind the lock of his sanctum. "That kings are masters to give, increase, diminish, invest ranks, and to prostitute at their will the greatest honours, that they have arrogated the right to seize the property of their subjects of every condition, and to rob them of their liberty by a stroke of the pen, nay, even of the pen of their ministers and favourites, is the miserable state of things to which the unbridled license of the subject in former times opened the way, and which Louis XIV. has known how to intensify without hindrance, before whose authority the mere name of law, right, privilege has become a crime. This general overthrow of all rights which renders every one a slave, renders the king (in virtue of unlimited self-will and unlimited adulation on the part of an oppressed nation—such is the sense of an intricate sentence) a despot. Such a prince, nurtured in this excessive enjoyment of power, forgets that his crown is a trust which does not belong to him as his property and of which he cannot dispose at will, that he has received it from his ancestors in virtue of substitution and not as a free heritage, that consequently he cannot arbitrarily interfere with this substitution, that it belongs neither to him nor to any of his forbears to dispose of the succession, that this right belongs only to the nation, from which they have received the crown," etc. etc.[1] This is sound democratic doctrine, and though for St Simon the nation consists practically of highly born and highly privileged persons like himself, the time was coming when the nation, in its recoil from slavery to freedom, would know to resume its original powers even if the succession were not vacant, and dismiss its king for breach of trust as a St Simon would send a presumptuous valet about his business. Louis evidently had his doubts as to its future submission. He deemed it necessary to strengthen his arbitrary edict by confirming it in his testament.[2] Even with this bulwark between him and an angry people, he was ill at ease at the thought that he could not assert his sovereignty against death, that greatest of democrats as well as of despots. "My testament will perhaps fare as did that of my father," he gloomily remarked to the ex-queen of England. "As long as we live we can do what we please. After death we can do less than the humblest of mortals."[3]

Old age and sorrow increased the *ennui* and the bigotry of the solitary potentate who had outlived his grandeur and his passions.

[1] Mémoires de St Simon, 232, 233.
[2] Isambert, xx. 627.
[3] Duclos, Mémoires Secrets, p. 71.

Madame de Maintenon had a hard task to provide distraction for a mind sated with glory and shaken by adversity. Concerts, comedies, operas, courtly fetes[1] had lost their relish. "What a punishment," groaned Madame, "to have to amuse a man whom it is no longer possible to amuse." Le Tellier, his Jesuit confessor, was more successful in providing a congenial pastime in the persecution of the Jansenists and the Protestants. Le Tellier's grand aim was to manipulate the conscience of his master in the interest of his order, and nothing could better serve that interest than the destruction of the remnants of these sects, which were the sworn foes of Jesuit doctrines in Church and State. With the exception of an occasional declaration, issued during the short interval of peace between 1698 and 1700, denouncing severe penalties against Protestant fugitives,[2] and re-enjoining the education of Protestant children in the Catholic faith,[3] the Protestants had enjoyed a period of comparative repose. The rebellion of the Cevennes, where the Protestants, under Cavalier and other desperate leaders, maintained for several years a stubborn resistance against even marshals like Villars and Berwick, was not without its chastening effect. Fourteen years of war had, moreover, left little or no time for religious persecution. Towards its close there came, however, another access of the persecuting fever, caught from the infectious zeal of the royal confessor. The Protestants, or "newly converted," to use the hypocritical ecclesiastical jargon of the time, were once more forbidden to retire from the kingdom, or to return to it without express permission.[4] Those so-called converts who refused to receive the sacrament from the priest, even if they declared that they had never abjured, were regarded as renegades from the faith, and treated accordingly.[5] As for the Jansenists, they were, if possible, more obnoxious to Louis than the Protestants. In his eyes Jansenism was equivalent to the crime of *lèse majesté*. Jansenist and republican were synonymous.[6] When the Duke of Orléans wished to take with him to Spain in 1707 a certain M. Montpertuis, Louis demurred on the score of his Jansenist mother. "My faith," answered the duke, "I know not what the mother is, but as to the son he is assuredly no Jansenist. He does not even believe in God." "Is it possible?" returned Louis, relaxing his austerity. "Nothing more certain, sire." "In that case you may

[1] See Mém. de St Simon, x. 117, and xii. 187.
[2] Isambert, xx. 342 (September 1699).
[3] *Ibid.*, xx. 313-319 (December 1698).
[4] *Ibid.*, xx. 605 (September 1713).
[5] *Ibid.*, xx. 640 (March 1715).
[6] Mém. de St Simon, x. 19.

take him," was the strange rejoinder.[1] At the instigation of Le Tellier, he obtained from Pope Clement XI. the renewed condemnation of the tenets of Jansen in more explicit and stringent terms.[2] The sisters of Port Royal refused to sign the Bull, and though the Pope respected their conscientious scruples, Le Tellier took advantage of their obstinacy to compass their destruction. Port Royal was rased to the ground,[3] and its pious community dispersed as a nest of republicanism and heresy, because the disciples of Pascal refused to be browbeaten by a rancorous monk and a priest-ridden king. To the very end of the chapter one has to record acts of violence to conscience at the bidding of ignorant fanatics, which form, in the bulk, a sad monument to the unenlightened, despotic instincts of a narrow mind. The destruction of Port Royal is a fitting sequel to the destruction of the Protestant temples, one more instance of the fatal tendency, on the part of Louis, to follow mistaken advice for lack of breadth of intelligence. It throws a significant light on the intellectual horizon of the most arrogant and self-assertive of potentates to find him, in so many important episodes of his reign, the mere puppet of a clever woman or a wily priest. He deferred to Madame, and followed Le Tellier as submissively as a dog does a shepherd. His self-assertion and his submission were alike ruinous to France.

The quarrel over the "Reflections" of the Jansenist father, Quesnel, furnished Le Tellier with an additional expedient for working them mischief. The Pope was gained over to condemn a book of edification which he had formerly approved, and promulgated the famous Bull Unigenitus,[4] containing a minute condemnation of Père Quesnel's ethical theology. The number of propositions thus condemned was a hundred and one, and the Pope had great difficulty in bringing it up to this total. Asked by Amelot, the French ambassador at Rome, to explain the odd figure, "What would you have me do?" returned Clement; "Père Le Tellier had assured the king that there was in this book more than a hundred propositions worthy of censure. He had no wish to be proved a liar, and he and his creatures have put their hands on my throat to add a few. I have gone only one more."[5] The unhappy Pope had reason to be ill at ease at his pliableness. Among the propositions to which Père Le Tellier took objection were several texts from the epistles of St Paul,

[1] The story, which seems incredible enough, was told by the duke to St Simon.

[2] Isambert, xx. 467-472 (August 1705).

[3] Méms. de St Simon, vii. 137-144.

[4] Isambert, xx. 616 (February 1714).

[5] Méms. de St Simon, xii. 276.

and many maxims from which any Christian, even a Pope, might have derived edification. It was not the first time that Popes had been wiser than the Bible, but the scandal of convicting St Paul, not to speak of St Augustine, as a heretic, was rather a heavy price to pay for the devotion of the Jesuits. Louis, too, was retracting his former political creed in subscribing to the condemnation of an assertion so favourable to the temporal power, that an unjust excommunication cannot bind the Christian conscience. Gallicans as well as Protestants had reason to pray for deliverance from the bigoted dotage of their king.[1]

That deliverance was now at hand. In the summer of 1715 Louis was prostrated with an ulcer in the leg, which, owing to the obstinate optimism of Fagon, the first court physician, was allowed to undermine his strength without the application of timely remedies.[2] In August his condition became rapidly worse, in spite of the elixir of a quack whom Fagon called to the rescue, and on the 1st September he succumbed to this painful malady in the seventy-seventh year of his age, and the seventy-second of his reign. In the chamber of death let the voice of the critic be hushed, especially as the critic has been in sufficient evidence in the course of the chapters devoted to the account of his long government. On his deathbed he became his own judge, and sorrowfully condemned the errors which had cost France dear—the love of war, of glory, of profusion. "You will soon become a great king," said he to the little Dauphin whom he called to his bedside, "but your whole happiness will depend on your submission to God, and your care for the interests of your people. In order to do this, refrain by every possible means from waging war. War is the ruin of the people. Do not follow the bad example I have set before you in this respect. I have often undertaken war too lightly, and have waged it by reason of vanity. Do not imitate me, but be a pacific prince, and let your principal application be to work for the good of your subjects."[3] Louis maintained his self-possession and dignity to the last, and melted all who were admitted to his chamber to tears by the heroic simplicity of his demeanour. He had always been an imposing figure, but in the presence of death he imposed by the simplicity of soul and strength of mind that need no pose to lend them effect. There was no weak collapse on the brink of eternity. He passed to his last account with

[1] See St Simon, Mémoires, x. 19-37 and 89-103, who bitterly criticises the king's ecclesiastical policy.

[2] Méms. de St Simon, xi. 377, 378.

[3] Mort de Louis XIV., Archives Curieuses, xii. 441.

the humility of mortality indeed, but with a courage and resignation befitting the close of a historic career. He spoke of death without trembling, and he took his measures in view of the hourly expected contingency with the same conscientious attention to detail, which had marked his long reign. "I am about to pass away," said he to the great officers of State, "but the State remaineth always. Be faithful to it, and let your example be such as all my other subjects may follow. Be united and of one mind; in union lies the strength of a State."[1] Every cheek was wet with tears except his, and only the feebleness of his voice betrayed the approaching change from life to death. Even the sobs of the princesses failed to break down his calm resolution. "I have often heard it said that it is difficult to die," he remarked to Madame de Maintenon. "For myself, who have almost reached the moment so redoubtable to mortals, I do not find it so difficult." "Death," returned Madame, "is only difficult for those who have restitution to make." "Ah," was the reply, "in the matter of restitution I owe none as an individual, but for those which I owe to the kingdom I hope in the mercy of God."[2] "This thought," adds the court diarist by way of comment, "seemed to trouble him, for he appeared very agitated throughout this night, clasping his hands at every moment, and praying to God. He repeated all the prayers which he offered whilst well, striking his chest at the *Confiteor*."[3] "Why do you weep?" asked he, on observing two pages overcome to tears at the foot of his bed. "Is it because you believed me immortal? For myself, I have never believed it, and you should, at my age, have been prepared to lose me."[4] The only anxiety he showed was for the forgiveness of his sins, and evidently the past was a heavy load on his conscience. "Give me once more a general absolution for my sins," he implored Le Tellier, with the implicit belief in the efficacy of religious externals, which had been such a curse to France. "I would gladly suffer far more for the expiation of my sins."[5] He died at any rate with the hope of heaven breaking through the gloom of remorse and repentance. "The hope that we shall soon rejoin each other in eternity is a great consolation to me in leaving you," he assured Madame de Maintenon. If the court gossip may be trusted, Madame failed to reciprocate this sentiment. "This is the rendezvous that he contemplates for me," she is said to have murmured on leaving the chamber. "This man has never loved anybody but himself."[6] Whether true or false,

[1] Mort de Louis XIV., Archives Curieuses, xii. 443.
[2] Journal de Dangeau, iii. 112, 113.
[3] *Ibid.*, iii. 113.
[4] *Ibid.*, iii. 113.
[5] *Ibid.*, iii. 114.
[6] Duclos, Méms. Secrets, 95.

Madame did not await the dissolution of her husband, but retired to St Cyr, to solace her weariness of courts, if not her grief, in the solitude of the cloister.[1] She had been marvellously favoured by fortune, but fortune did not give her real happiness. "I find, on reviewing my life," she wrote to Madame de Villette, "that since the age of thirty-two, when my success commenced, I have not had a moment without worry, and the worries have gone on increasing."

With the first half of the reign of Louis XIV. monarchic absolutism reached its zenith in France. Before its close decadence had commenced. His government had become widely and intensely unpopular.[2] A long period of universal wretchedness had succeeded an all too short period of general prosperity. If the history of Louis is in some respects the splendid apotheosis, it is in other respects the crushing condemnation, of absolutism. This strange contradiction arises from the fact that his reign has two sides, is, in other words, a reign of extraordinary contrasts. It will be judged differently as we look at it from the court or the hut, as we take Versailles or France as our standpoint. To judge comprehensively, it is necessary to look at it from both. From the one point of view how dazzling the splendour; from the other how deep the shadow! The contrast is significant. At Versailles we seem to be out of touch with the nation, out of touch even with Paris. It is a world apart, magnificent, imposing indeed, but self-contained and self-sufficient. To mistake Versailles for France would be to mistake a Titian for a Rembrandt, a canvas glaring with brilliant colouring for one painted in clair-obscure. On the one hand, the utmost splendour and profusion, *fêtes*, pageants, crowds of courtiers, and a ceremonial, ponderous, tiresome, and often ridiculous in its elaborate minuteness; on the other, misery, starvation, rags. Still more ominous, there is no link between the two. Louis does not know the people; the people does not know him. They are not in sympathy, because they live in isolation, and their interests are becoming more and more hostile. The people has learned to see in its king a stranger, who is only known to it as an oppressor, a taskmaster. It was a fatal day for the French monarchy when this spirit of aloofness took possession of king and court. In the isolation of Versailles lies one of the germs of the Revolution.

The collossal proportions of Versailles form a monument of the grand style which to Louis meant greatness. He certainly possessed

[1] The principal accounts of Louis' last days are those of Dangeau, St Simon (Méms., xi. 387 *et seq.*), and the Mort de Louis XIV.

[2] Méms. de St Simon, xii. 186.

in a rare degree the sense of the grand, was endowed with some of the qualities which lend distinction and inspire respect. He was eminently fitted to be the presiding genius of a polished, if artificial, society. His figure, his features, his carriage, his grace, his majesty, the music of his voice were those of a man born to fascinate. Some of the most unsparing of his critics bear testimony to the wonderful charm and power of his personality.[1] He had, as St Simon says, "the talent of *fêtes*, pleasures, gallantry," and though, according to the same authority, "his mind was below mediocrity, and he was by reason of an imperfect education, essentially ignorant," he was capable of improving it by constant contact with men and women of superior intelligence and the most varied talents and attainments. He was at bottom, too, according to the same observant, though not always trustworthy critic, upright and well meaning,[2] and just missed being a good and, to a certain extent, a great king. It was his misfortune rather than his fault to be ignorant, and, therefore, too dependent on others in many things that called for enlightenment of judgment and sufficiency of knowledge. To this defect St Simon traces all the evil of his reign. He was only saved by his desire to excel, by that feeling for the grandiose, if not for the truly great, which the memoir writers of the time designate by the phrase, "the love of glory," from sinking into a confirmed sensualist. When the strength of his passions subsided and he turned to piety, his defective intellectual culture made him a bigot, the puppet of obscurantist fanatics. Even the desire to excel was, however, not always the fruit of enlightened instincts. It was actuated by a vanity which greedily drank in the elixir of flattery, and by an egotism which was jealous of true merit. "He delighted in flattery to such a degree," says St Simon, "that the most gross adulation was well received, the basest kind still more relished. He could not appreciate greatness except as an emanation of his own. All other greatness was odious to him."[3] He was so fond of hearing his own praises that he would hum to himself snatches of the operas in which his virtues were recited. "His pride was such that, without the fear of the devil, which God left him even in his greatest excesses, he would have allowed himself to be worshipped, and would have found worshippers in plenty."[4] The true dignity of human worth, of independence of character, was banished from his presence. Servility was the only passport to Versailles, and not to show face at Versailles was to be guilty of something like *lèse majesté* and to incur irremediable disgrace. He

[1] Mémoires de St Simon, xii. 3.
[2] *Ibid.*, xii. 13.
[3] *Ibid.*, xii. 15, 19; cf. 42, 43.
[4] *Ibid.*, xii. 23.

had an alert eye for marking who was present and who was absent. Consequently, when he went to bed in the evening, or rose in the morning, when he dined or supped, when he walked or hunted, he was always in a crowd. He detested the noise of Paris, but he was no lover of solitude. Needless to say, there were few men or women in France who could afford not to be of the crowd, and one of the worst effects of his egotism was to make servility fashionable.

At the same time, it is only fair to note that his reign was in some respects one of real and great distinction. It witnessed the extraordinary outburst of the highest powers of France in many spheres of activity. It is one of those periods of inspiration which produce a series of remarkable men. It is a harvest-time of intellect and imagination. Between 1643 and 1715 what a galaxy of notable figures appears on the stage of French history. Mazarin, Colbert, Lionne, Louvois, Corneille, Racine, Molière, Condé, Turenne, Luxemburg, Vauban, are names of high rank in diplomacy, administration, literature, generalship. Their greatness illustrates the age, if it does not eclipse, in certain of these branches of activity, that of a Henry IV. and a Richelieu for great achievement. Louis certainly did not create that greatness, though he had the conceit to believe it. It cannot be said that he inspired it, but it may be said that in his own egotistic fashion he contributed to the aspiration of it. The monarch who said, "The love of glory is the supreme passion of my soul,"[1] was at least fitted to be the patron of a memorable epoch in administration, diplomacy, war, art, literature. That he was an enlightened one is a different matter. No absolute potentate has succeeded in an equal degree in plagiarising all merit in the consummation of his personal power. Louis succeeded because he had at least a selfish sense of every species of excellence and the arrogance to credit himself with it.

From the standpoint of France, it is impossible to ascribe greatness to the reign of Louis XIV. There is no comparison, if we except the first few years of admirable promise, between it and those of Henry IV. and Louis XII., in respect of the welfare of the people. This, and not the meretricious splendours of royalty, is the true test of royal grandeur. The widespread unpopularity of the dying monarch is not ascribable to mere popular fickleness and ingratitude. It is only too well founded in the wretchedness of the people. The most indulgent critic cannot get over the fact that his rule had for long years been fatal to the interests of the nation. The misery of France is a melancholy commentary on the practical effects of the

[1] Mém. Hist., ii. 424.

theory of the unlimited power of the monarch, elaborated by Bossuet in his "Politique" and embodied by Louis in his government. Give a single individual, by hereditary right, unlimited dominion over a nation, and if that individual be an unenlightened, ambitious, vainglorious potentate like Louis XIV., the results must be disastrous War, extravagance, despotism, poverty, starvation form the epitome of nearly half a century of the system which identifies in theory and practice the State with the monarch. The latter half of the reign, in particular, might almost pass for a systematic and successful attempt to exhaust and mortify France. So complete is the collapse of the national strength that an observer, looking merely at results, might conclude that the country had been ruled for a quarter of a century by its worst enemy. Louis doubtless believed himself a patriot, and had a patriotic ideal of a kind in view in his internal administration and foreign policy. His predominance meant of course the predominance of France. "The interest of the State is the supreme interest. When the monarch has the State in view he works for himself. The welfare of the one is the glory of the other."[1] Good, but if the interest of the State is equivalent to the egoism of the monarch, what becomes of its welfare? Religious liberty is offensive to his arrogance and his intolerance. Hence the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, which was certainly not conducive to the welfare of the State. The centralisation of power involves the extension of the doctrine of State interference with industry and commerce. Hence the shower of restrictive edicts which ultimately struck prosperity with a terrible blight. The interest of the king is conceived to lie in vast schemes of conquest. Hence a succession of great wars which turn the peasant into a soldier, overwhelm the taxpayer, induce bankruptcy, and complete the ruin of commerce and industry. The splendour of his court demands the attendance of a crowd of sycophant nobles and prelates. Consequently the nobles disaccustom themselves from the practice of residing on their estates, and waste not only their rents, but large pensions on the dissipation and luxury of an extravagant court. The prelates likewise become absentees, and spend their revenues and whatever they can filch out of the royal exchequer at Versailles and Paris. They neglect their functions in order to cultivate the arts of the courtier and the man of fashion. Hence the scandal of a mitred priesthood, which becomes more and more dissipated, and whose bigotry presents a striking contrast to its mundane views of the priestly office. There is no patriotism in all this, no conception of the true interests of

[1] Méms. Hist., ii. 455-459.

the nation. There is only egotism, or at best a blind pride and self-deception which unfit the monarch for the *metier du Roi*. Louis professed indeed to his son, the King of Spain, and his great-grandson, who was to succeed him, wise maxims of conduct and administration, but an overwhelming debt, the presence of misery and starvation in the peasants' huts, the carnage of hundreds of thousands of brave men, the depression of the prosperity, the power, the prestige of France show that if he could utter wise maxims, he was not the man to carry them out. Voltaire and all the rest of Louis' panegyrists vaunt the glory of the reign as the climax of history. Voltaire forgot, in his predilection for the mere splendours of the court, which he retails in the tone of the showman who vaunts the marvels of the show within to the gaping crowd without, to look at the hideous reality behind the show. The poets and the rhetoricians have a knack of blinking reality. Judged by its final results, the reign of Louis XIV. was a gigantic failure. Did his government make France prosperous and contented? Did it observe the grand law of the welfare of the people before everything else? Did it tend to hand down to posterity one progressive idea? For the answer to these questions we must look at France as Louis left it,—France exhausted, maimed, ruined, disheartened, disgraced, rebellious, overflowing with imprecations, if we would judge rightly of the man and his system. "This kingdom," wrote Stair, the British ambassador, to Stanhope in July 1715 (two months before Louis' death), "is ruined. The capitation tax and the income tax of the tenth, which is being imposed without limit, can only end in its destruction. The people is degraded by servitude to a point which one can hardly conceive."[1] The testimony of Stair is confirmed by that of the Duke of Noailles, who, two months later, wrote to Madame de Maintenon, "Both the king and his subjects are ruined." The growth of the monarchic power, as against aristocratic faction and feudal turbulence, was, as we have seen, a benefit to France, because the monarchy stood for the people, the nation as against faction. At this stage the monarchic power stands not for the nation, but for the monarch, who is intoxicated with his own interests and ambitions, and sacrifices the nation to his egoism. Such a monarch had long outlived his reputation and his better self, outlived on his death-bed everything that can make death passable, the love of the nation and the hope of its future weal, everything except the courage that had braved adversity, and met death at last with composure. Once dead beyond dispute, the feeling of the nation is one of relief, of joy even.

[1] Wiesener, Le Régent, l'Abbé Dubois, et les Anglais, i. 17, 18.

which gave vent to itself in brutal enough fashion,[1] in ribald songs, jests, noisy conviviality, and other signs of indecent rejoicing that greeted the funeral cortege of the *grand roi* to St Denis. When Henry IV. died, Paris and France wept; when Louis XIII. died, they laughed; when Louis XIV. died, they got drunk.

SOURCES OF THIS CHAPTER.—Isambert, Recueil, xx.; Mignet, Négociations relatives à la Succession d'Espagne; Mémoires de Torcy in Petitot, second series; Mémoires Historiques (Louis XIV.); Mémoires de St Simon; Dumont, Corps Diplomatique, viii.; Mémoires Militaires relatifs à la Succession d'Espagne sous Louis XIV., edited for the Documents Inédits by Lieutenant-General Pelet; Journal de Dangeau; Duclos, Mémoires Secrets sur le Regne de Louis XIV. (Barrière); Voltaire, Siècle de Louis XIV.; Bailly, Histoire Financière; Michelet, Histoire de France, xvi.; Fénélon, Plans de Gouvernement in Œuvres, xxii.; Mort de Louis XIV., Archives Curieuses, xii.; Wiesener, Le Régent, l'Abbé Dubois, et les Anglais.

[1] See Mémoires de St Simon, xii. 188.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE LITERARY APOTHEOSIS OF ABSOLUTE MONARCHY—BOSSUET ITS EXPONENT; FÉNÉLON ITS OPPONENT (17TH CENTURY).

IT would be almost as vain to look for free political discussion in seventeenth-century France as in modern Russia. The century which witnessed the apotheosis of absolutism in France was not conducive to independent political speculation. We miss the verve, the audacity, the self-assertion of the sixteenth. True, it is the century of the Fronde, but the Fronde was a political abortion, and while it produced a breed of politicians, it produced no great political thinker to vindicate its principles. The seventeenth century is for France as barren of independent political discussion as it was fertile for England. The political writers of outstanding name confine themselves, with some partial exceptions, to the exposition and glorification of the dominant system of absolute monarchy. The battlefield of religious liberty and political right has been shifted from France to England. The French had lost the battle which the English were now engaged in fighting and also in winning. While England may boast a Milton, a Sidney, a Locke, and other theoretical champions of political liberty, France, during the same period, has only its obscure pamphleteers of the Fronde and the latter part of the reign of Louis XIV. to voice the cause of freedom against despotism. Grotius and Bossuet are its political prophets, and Grotius and Bossuet are the theoretic exponents of the dominant system of government, the champions of crass political servitude. Fénélon, St Simon, Boulainvilliers, and other writers more or less eminent, strike a jarring note in the harmony of adulation and submission before the throne, but St Simon, and even Fénélon, are too closely wedded to aristocratic privilege and pretension to be the worthy peers of a Sidney or a Locke in the advocacy of popular rights. With them the sovereignty of the people is equivalent merely to the sovereignty of a part of the people, the sovereignty of a privileged faction, which is in reality as incompatible

with that of the nation as is the unlimited sovereignty of the monarch.

The political writings of a Grotius or a Bossuet have only an antiquarian interest from the more modern political standpoint. Their dogmas have been left high and dry, like the *débris* of some old world formation, by the flowing tide of progressive political thought. Historically, however, they have an interest of their own in marking the fundamental ideas on which the system of Richelieu and Louis XIV. was based, and in enabling us to understand the frame of mind of the generation to which these ideas seemed the consummation of all political experience and all political reasoning. To realise the pretensions of the French monarchy in all its pride and presumption, to realise the servility and abnegation of the nation during the period of the most positive assertion of these pretensions, it is necessary to open the "Politique" of Bossuet. It certainly requires a stretch of the imagination at this time of day to believe that there were thousands of intelligent men and women ready to subscribe to such a political creed, to acknowledge their own slavery, and regard this creed as the sum and substance of all political truth. It is only as we realise this fact that we can gauge the extent of the reaction of the seventeenth century in France from the political contention of the sixteenth, as well as the coming reaction of the eighteenth from the submissive attitude of the seventeenth.

By what inconsistency of events do we find the celebrated historian and panegyrist of the Dutch Republic paying court to Louis XIII., or rather Richelieu, and writing a treatise in vindication of absolute monarchy? The doctrine of the absolute sovereignty of kings sounds strange on the lips of the Dutch republican who composed the "Annals of the Low Countries,"[1] under the patronage of the States-General of Holland. It was a comical episode that brought him a fugitive to France; it was the bitter experience of persecution, from which even Holland was not exempt, that doubtless helped to transform the republican historian into the champion of Bourbon absolutism. Grotius had the misfortune to incur the hatred of Maurice of Orange and the Calvinist zealots whom he befriended, with the result that he was imprisoned in the fortress of Löwenstein. He was allowed the privilege of occasionally receiving an instalment of books in a trunk. This trunk served at the same time to convey back to his library the volumes which he had read in the interval. It occurred to Madame Grotius to use it to convey the

[1] De Rebus Belgicis, or the Annals and History of the Low Countrey Warrs, rendered into English by T. M., of the Middle Temple.

philosopher instead of his books. The regular transport of the trunk served to disarm the alertness of his guards, and thus the illustrious prisoner was transported to Gorcum without mishap. From Gorcum he continued his flight to France. Richelieu gave him a small pension, and on this and the scanty earnings of his pen he managed to maintain himself and his family during the years of his exile. It was during this period, and in these circumstances, that he wrote his celebrated treatise "Concerning Peace and War."[1]

Grotius is the first of the moderns to enunciate the fact of natural law, as deriving from the principles of human nature. In so doing he was not original. He only repeated and amplified Cicero and the Stoic philosophers. For him, as for them, the laws written in the heart of man precede the laws written in the statute-book. Society is not the mere result of convention, founded on utility, as Hobbes was erelong to propound; it is derived from the moral nature of man. In Grotius' view it would be incorrect to contrast, as so many theorists do, a state of nature with a state of society. The contrast should be between a state of nature and the civil state, and it seems to be nearer the truth than the assumptions of a Hobbes or a Rousseau. Man is a social being, gifted with reason and conscience, and governed by the laws of his nature, anterior to any convention resulting from contract or utility. From this fact he derives a body of natural law innate in human nature. Respect for property, the necessity of restoring what belongs to another, the reparation of damage inflicted, the obligation of promises, the punishment of their transgression, are, he thinks, to be reckoned among these primitive laws. Force, cunning, egotism, are not the exclusive guides of men in a state of nature; justice, love, pity have also their place and their operation.

Natural law deals with rights by nature, civil law with rights by institution. Civil law is the result of the compact by which the State is established, and like his predecessor of the sixteenth century, he is a firm believer in the assumption that the State is the product of a contract. While utility is the occasion of its establishment—and utility, it should be borne in mind, is not equivalent to mere selfishness—the compact derives its force from the principles of natural law. Men, as members of a State, agree to dispense justice, not merely because it is useful to do so, but because justice is innate and imperative. Utility likewise gave birth to international law, since it is necessary to observe certain conditions, not only between citizens of the same State, but between one State and another. Nations have

[1] De Jure Pacis et Belli, translated into English by W. Whewell, D.D.

rights as well as individuals. For both, justice, not mere statecraft, far less mere interest, is the supreme law. It is superior even to force. War is permissible—Grotius' book is in fact a treatise on the laws of war and peace, interpreted in the widest sense as the laws which regulate the internal government and the external policy of a State—but "war is never to be undertaken except to assert rights, and when undertaken is never to be carried on except within the limits of rights and of good faith."[1] Wars of glory and ambition are unjust and iniquitous. In striking contrast to his age, good faith and a Christian spirit of forbearance are the keynotes of his foreign policy. While discussing the laws of war he earnestly impresses on his bellicose age that it should be waged only for the sake of peace, and displaced, if possible, by arbitration. "It would be useful, and indeed it is almost necessary, that certain congresses of Christian powers should be held in which controversies which arise among some of them should be decided by others who are not interested, and in which measures may be taken to compel the parties to accept peace on equitable terms." We have here evidently the echo of the cosmopolitan ideas of Henry IV. and Sully.

The institution of the civil law or the State brings him face to face with the question of the sovereignty. Sovereign power is one which is not subject to the control of another, and each nation may choose what form of sovereignty it pleases. Without enlarging on the origin of the sovereignty, Grotius thus appears to place it in the people. Following Bodin, of whom he was a careful student, he thinks that the people may alienate it if it pleases. By this assumption he paves the way for the enunciation of his doctrine of political slavery, and the exercise of unlimited power on the part of the sovereign. The people may sell its liberty in return for the benefits of slavery. As there are men who are fitted by nature to be slaves, so, thinks Grotius, there are peoples which are unfit for liberty. Sometimes the condition of a State is such that it can only be safe under the absolute sovereignty of one. Political as well as personal servitude is equally reasonable and serviceable. A people may also lose its liberty by the rights of war, become subject by conquest. The conquered become the patrimony of the conqueror. The assertion that he who constitutes any authority is superior to the authority so constituted, is only true of that constitution which depends perpetually on the will of the constituent body, not of that which, though voluntary at first, afterwards becomes compulsory. It is not even true that all governments exist for the sake of the governed,

[1] P. 30.

for there have been governments established by victorious kings for their own exclusive advantage. Such cool assumption almost takes away the breath of the modern reader. We have evidently far outstripped Bodin on the road to the unreserved assertion of monarchic despotism. It is a strange idea of a compact that deprives the one party of all rights, natural as well as civil, and gives all power to the other, and Sidney, Locke, and other champions of popular liberty will have little difficulty in exposing the sophism of such a contract. It is, too, a brutal enough conclusion that because a king may subjugate a free people by the sword, he is entitled to deprive it of all political rights. Invest the king with the attribute of divine right, as Bossuet will do, and we have Louis XIV. in all the plenitude of his pretensions. Grotius does not build on Scripture like Bossuet, but he quotes with approval maxims like these:—"God alone is the judge of the prince;" "The prince is free to do, or not to do, what he pleases." He denies that the sovereignty everywhere belongs to the people, or that the people has the power of controlling kings and of punishing them if they abuse their power, and he quotes plenty of historical illustrations in support of his contention. History is full of instances of government by absolute rulers, but history proves nothing where the question is one not of fact, but of right. The exercise of the sovereignty is not its justification, as Grotius assumed. Absolute government is no doubt ancient, but its antiquity does not prove that it is the duty of a people to submit to it.

His ideal king is thus an irresponsible ruler. Kings subject, to the people are only improperly called kings, and he follows Bodin in asserting that a monarchy in which the royal power is dependent on the people is in reality a democracy. The true king, in virtue of his sovereign office, has no superior but God. The chance of most kings getting a place in Grotius' category of royalties is small indeed. The only kings in Europe to-day are, according to this doctrine, the Czar and the Sultan. In an interesting chapter on the war of subjects against superiors,[1] he nevertheless admits the right of resistance in extreme cases. "It is beyond controversy among all good men that if persons in authority command anything contrary to natural law, it is not to be done." Subordination to sovereign authority is imperative in the interest of the State, but if a king acts with a view to the destruction of a whole people, and thus becomes an enemy to the State, if a senate possesses a certain authority, as in a mixed monarchy, and the king invades its functions,

[1] Pp. 52-59.

if the constitution contains an express stipulation that in a certain event the monarch may be resisted, if the king alienate the kingdom and bring it under subjection to a foreign power, resistance is permissible. These are large reservations, doubtless, but to the legal mind of the philosophic jurist anything savouring of democratic self-assertion is repulsive. That the subject should seek to obtain a diminution of the sovereign authority and an increase of liberty, by force in the last resort, he regards as an attack on the right of property, even if the royal authority were at first obtained by violence. "For authority gained at first by force, may, by tacit consent, become firm right, and the will exercised either in the original institution of a government, or at a later period, may be such as to give a right which afterwards does not depend on the will. But that a long forbearance of the king (in asserting a right) may be a sufficient ground of the people obtaining its liberty, owing to a presumed relinquishment of imperial authority, is not to be doubted."[1] Where political progress comes in under this modicum of self-help, it is not easy to see. How many generations might be counted before this presumed relinquishment might come into operation? The king may concede, the subject may not demand. The generosity of kings has unfortunately had to be prompted by the people in no very polite terms at times, and Grotius, in overlooking this fact, shows that like most philosophers he was not deeply versed in the knowledge of human nature or practical affairs.

Grotius may be regarded as the theoretic exponent of the system which Richelieu embodied in his "Political Testament" from the standpoint of the practical politician. In the "Testament" the monarchic authority is assumed to be the sole authority in the State. Though the cardinal defends the ecclesiastical jurisdiction from the encroachment of the Parliaments, in matters purely spiritual, it must not be allowed to become dangerous to the power of the Crown. The pretensions of the Pope, in particular, must be kept within the bounds prescribed by the interest of the monarch and the State. The right of appeal by the clergy from the Parliaments to the royal council in matters pertaining to their jurisdiction may be allowed in order to strengthen the royal power over both. The tendency of Richelieu, himself churchman as well as statesman, is to subordinate the Church to the king, but to maintain and augment the episcopal authority against all limits from below. A hierarchy, submissive to the king and imposing to the people, would, of course, be a good guarantee of popular subordination. Such a Church is

[1] P. 91.

a powerful adjunct of despotism, as the history of the reign of Louis XIV. amply proves. The Church should, moreover, nurture learning, "one of the chief ornaments of States," but the cardinal does not hesitate to affirm that the general spread of knowledge is not advisable in the interests of good government. The founder and patron of the Academy is not the advocate of popular education. "As a body having eyes in all its parts would be monstrous, so would a State whose inhabitants were all learned. Pride and presumption would be as common as obedience would be rare. Commerce, husbandry, and the military profession must suffer incalculable mischief, and litigation be enormously increased, if knowledge were to become common property." He is, moreover, haunted by that nightmare of despotic natures, the fear of the effects of freedom of thought in undermining obscurantism in Church and State. If the people are educated to think for themselves, what will become of the throne and the altar? What if it enter into their presumptuous heads to question the right of a few individuals to vast and oppressive privileges, or of one individual to do as he likes to the detriment of all other individuals? The idea makes the cardinal shiver. "If learning were profaned to all sorts of minds, we should find more persons capable of forming doubts than of resolving them, and many would be fitter to oppose than to defend truth." Let the people, therefore, he says in effect, remain stupid, ignorant, impotent, and be thankful that there is a great Cardinal de Richelieu to keep them in their places, and a certain number of learned, but unenlightened doctors of law and theology to teach them submission to the powers that be. In thus reasoning, Richelieu shows himself a poor logician and a bad statesman. He mistakes the spirit of liberty for that of sedition; he equates the system of tutelage and slavery with the science of politics; he forgets that the growth of knowledge can only conduce to good government by lessening the risk of bad government. An educated public opinion cannot be hostile to the true interests of the State, because it tends to act as a check on misgovernment, while, on the other hand, an absolutism that might do admirable service in the hands of a Henry IV., may, thanks to the ignorance and impotence of the masses, become a terrible scourge in the hands of a Louis XIV. or a Louis XV.

The aristocratic instinct of the great cardinal, who was concerned for the greatness of the nation in the abstract, for France and the glory of France, rather than for the toiling millions that compose the nation, appears markedly in the remarks on the place of the nobility under an absolute king. While he regards the aristocracy as one of

the main props of the Crown, and consequently entitled to distinction of rank and privilege, he emphasises the necessity of proving its title by service rendered to the king. Its distinctive function is military, and he demands that it shall perform its function by serving the king in war instead of turbulently opposing his will. An effeminate nobility is as detrimental as a turbulent one. It is a burden to the State, as a palsied arm is an encumbrance to the body. "Those who have degenerated from the virtue of their forefathers and do not serve the Crown with their swords and lives with all the courage and constancy required by the law, deserve to be deprived of the advantages of their birth and to be reduced to bear part of the burdens of the people." Expedients, some of them good, some of them bad, are formulated for increasing the serviceableness of the nobility not only in the army, but in the magistracy and the Church. Richelieu would reduce the expenses of attendance at court, create additional troops of cavalry and infantry, suppress the sale of military appointments, and reward merit, confer the benefices in the royal gift on candidates of aristocratic birth, and prefer such if possible for the office of judge. His preference for aristocratic bishops cannot, in view of the degenerate character of the French episcopacy as a mere asylum for impecunious younger sons of fashionable parents, be called a wise one, and the tendency to depreciate the worth of ability and character, apart from birth, is equally petty, though very characteristic of a man who affected an almost royal pomp. "A low birth," in his estimation, "seldom produces the parts necessary in a magistrate, and it is certain that the virtue of a man well born has something more noble in it than that which is found in a man of meaner extraction." This subtle distinction between aristocratic and non-aristocratic virtue is not known to moral philosophers, who would probably opine that a jurist in close sympathy with lowly humanity, by reason of his humble extraction, would be more likely to dispense justice with knowledge and integrity than a person who looked down on a plebeian world from the pedestal of birth prejudice. This exaggerated reverence for rank shows how artificial was Richelieu's system of national unity under monarchic auspices. It is a mere mechanic unity with an absolute crown for its symbol. Feudal insubordination shall vanish, but the spirit of feudalism, the spirit of caste and privilege shall remain, and the interests of the mass shall be sacrificed to the interests and prejudices of the class. National unity in this sense is a mere form without substance, without soul. The true unity will only come with equality before the law, with equality of taxation, of civil rights, with the conscious

ness of a fraternity of citizens. How far off the cardinal is from such a conception of unity, we may conceive from such remarks as the following:—"The people must be compared to mules, which being used to burdens are spoiled more by rest than by labour." "The burden of the animal must be proportionate to its strength," he adds condescendingly, but he has not, apparently, the slightest suspicion that the plebeian mule may one day take it into its head to demand that the aristocratic high-bred should help to carry the burden.

The idea of reform is, however, not entirely absent from his mind. "Time and occasion will open the eyes of those who come after us in other ages to perform that usefully which we dare not undertake in this without imprudently exposing the State to a great deal of danger." For the present he apologises for even the most crying abuses. "The disorders which have been established by public necessities, and strengthened by reasons of State, cannot be reformed without time. It must be done by degrees without passing from one extreme to another." True, but what if statesmen act on this principle until the work of reform becomes the work of revolution? When they hesitate to begin reform, they usually end by never beginning, whereas if they would set their hand to the business of suppressing abuses they would find many of them crumble at their touch. This fear of reform, which Richelieu did not show when the demands of his system of centralisation were concerned, was always the bugbear of French statesmen, with a few exceptions, under the old *régime*. They either did not begin at all, or began too late, began when the body of the State was so corrupt that the disease was past remedy. The tinkering and patching method was merely protracting its collapse. Richelieu's method in dealing with abuses, apart from those which militated against his doctrine of monarchic supremacy, is of this pettifogging sort. The king should, for instance, avoid war for the future as much as possible, which few kings in those days of unlimited power will do, should be guided by the public interest rather than by his passions, should beware of flatterers and reform his household, should govern in co-operation with his council, which should be composed of men of integrity and application, and directed by a prime minister enjoying the confidence of the monarch and invested with supreme authority, and should do all manner of admirable things which he never does. It is the old story of good advice seldom acted upon, good intentions seldom fulfilled, which was to be repeated at intervals until the great crash came. The one great condition of effective government, the training

of the people to govern itself, is ignored. The "Testament Politique" recognises the right neither of the States-General nor of the Parliaments to intervention in government and legislation. The king is absolute, the minister supreme, the council the servant of their will. Criticism or opposition, whether by individuals or by the organs of the old constitution, is denounced as malice or sedition. A government without the criticism and the co-operation of the people cannot, except, perhaps, temporarily, be a serviceable government, and Richelieu, in eschewing co-operation and criticism, was preparing the final suicide of his system.[1]

The antidote to Grotius and Richelieu is to be found in the reactionary writers of the Fronde, of whom Paul de Gondy, Cardinal de Retz, is the most celebrated. Retz was not a philosopher, but he was a subtle politician and the sworn foe of the system of Richelieu. He was, moreover, the prince, nay, the king of the memoir writers of his time. He looks at you with a roguish wink while he scribbles away in his lively, pungent style, for he is very wicked and very good humoured all through. He is as sharp as a needle, and can probe the acts and motives of men to the quick. Intrigue being his strong point, he can get up a situation with the most masterful ease, and can pose in a character the least like his own, with the most amusing assurance. Even in writing his memoirs, he is ever the conscious actor, and yet he manages with rare skill to give himself the airs of honesty, nay, of sanctity on occasion. All through the Fronde, he was engaged in playing a part, for his own advantage chiefly, and yet in the memoirs there never was a more noble and ill-used patriot, whom the court systematically tried to befool. In reality, Anne of Austria and Mazarin knew the coadjutor, and estimated him at his true value. In the memoirs they are constantly exposing an honest man to ridicule and contempt. The vivacity and force of the memoirs are, nevertheless, unquestionable. Gondy possessed some of the highest qualities of the historian—intellect, penetration, power of marshalling events, graphic energy of description, which raise him far above the conventional annalist of his own or any preceding period of French history. In these respects he almost equals St Simon, and to realise his immense

[1] The "Testament Politique," which was first published at Amsterdam in 1688, consists of two parts—the "Succincte Narration," of which I have made use in the chapter on Richelieu's administration, and the "Testament" proper. There are doubts about the authenticity of the second part, but the bulk of criticism now inclines to the opinion that it contains a trustworthy statement of Richelieu's mature views. A corrected edition was published in 1764 by M. de la Foncemagne.

superiority as a historian over his contemporaries, it is only necessary to compare his memoirs with those of Mathieu Molé. Molé is by far the superior character; he is the sincere champion of legal rights and the liberty of the subject; he is by far the inferior writer.

Gondy made his *début* in literature by a recast of Mascardi's "Conspiracy of Count Giovanni Luigi de Fieschi." This production has no value as history, for Gondy set himself, with the most extraordinary disregard for historical truth, to infuse into it his own sentiments and ideas. It becomes in his hands a laudation of the conspirator, actuated by passionate hate of a rival, Giovanni Doria, and by the reckless spirit of self-assertion which will not submit to the established order of things, or refrain from any means to compass its impetuous ends. It is not difficult to perceive that the tyrant Doria is, in the Abbé de Gondy's thoughts, another name for Richelieu. "You have been born," he makes Verinna say to his hero, "in an age which has produced scarcely any example of strength and generosity of soul that has not been punished, and which does not represent to you every day the recompense of baseness and cowardice. Add to this that you have been born in a country where the power of the Doria holds the spirits of all the nobility enslaved by shameful fear or servile interest. You at least will not fall into this general baseness. . . . Remember that only a man of your quality and your merit is necessary to revive the courage of the Genoese, and to inflame them with their former love of liberty." Liberty may best be served by generous souls without scruples. "Conscience and greatness have at all times been incompatible." This was dangerous teaching, savours of modern anarchism in fact, and Richelieu, on reading the MS., to which he refused for a time the favour of publicity, felt the danger. "A dangerous spirit," was his not inapt comment on the irrepressible abbé. He nevertheless left him at large to pursue his dangerous course of intrigue, feeling that his power no longer stood in need of repressive measures against a wild young man in the period of effervescent ambition.

The disorders of his moral life[1] were ill in keeping with the ecclesiastical profession which his family had forced upon him. He nevertheless applied himself with ardour to the study of theology as well as the classics, and was one of the most brilliant young ecclesiastics of the day when, in 1643, the regent Anne made him coadjutor of his uncle, the Archbishop of Paris. This high position did not improve his morals or detach him from politics. He remained a

[1] See, for instance, Méms. de St Simon, vii. 337, 338.

man of the world according to the lax standard of the time, having resolved, he tells us with abominable cynicism, to be a wicked man in the sight of God, but an honest man before the world. Being an opportunist in practical politics, his political doctrines do not merit much consideration, except as evidence that political liberty had not been altogether stamped out by the iron hand of Richelieu. Historically, he can discover no antique origin for absolute monarchy in France. It is for him not older than the century in which he writes. In France it is liberty that is ancient, despotism that is new. Richelieu is the grand innovator, the destroyer of the ancient liberties of the French people. He has created in the most legitimate of monarchies the most scandalous and dangerous tyranny that has ever perhaps enslaved a nation. Such despotism will invite its own destruction. God alone, he exclaims, can exist by Himself; monarchs only by the aid of the laws and of armed force to execute them. But force without law is fatal to the stability of the State. The Roman empire put up to auction suffices to show the end of a despotism maintained by force. Revolution is its ultimate goal.[1] Retz imagined that this goal had been reached in the Fronde. He lived long enough to realise his mistake. The coadjutor was no Mirabeau, the Frondeurs were not the men of 1789.

After the Fronde came the apotheosis of absolute monarchy, in the person of Louis XIV., which found its prophet in Bossuet, Bishop of Meaux. In Bossuet the belief in the divinity of heroes seems to be pitchforked from the mythic ages into the seventeenth century of the Christian era. His absolute monarch is half human, half divine. He is elevated above common mortality by a mystic majesty. Royalty is a sort of worship, and Bossuet furnishes the *raison d'être* of this worship in the "Politique Tirée de l'Écriture Sainte." Doubtless the writer is sincere in his exaggerated reverence for the monarch. He reflected the spirit of his time, the spirit of servility dominant at Versailles. With all his intellectual power he is limited by his age, and it is only in virtue of this fact, which detracts from his greatness as a thinker and writer, that he is entitled to the merit of sincerity. There is, however, another side to Bossuet. He is great as a moralist, he has the sense of proportion when dealing with the moral verities of life and death. If he idolises the king, he attacks and slays the rampant vices of the age, its ambition, pride, sensuality, frivolity. He scolds its vain women, thunders against its sybarites in high places, reproves its army of coxcombs. He voices at times the

[1] For a concise statement of Retz's political views, see Janet, Histoire de la Science Politique, ii. 267-270.

misery of the people, and does not spare the seigneur who prides himself on his birth, and forgets "that God and nature have made all men equal." He was the friend of the poor man in an age when the poor man stood sorely in need of a friend. There is a note of true democracy in the appeal he made from the pulpit for help to the starving masses, to those who were dying of hunger at the doors of the rich. He warns them that every man has a right to live, and that consequently superfluous riches are not beyond question. He is not satisfied to beg for the poor; he reminds his rich auditors that to give to him that hath not is a duty, because they hold their riches only as a trust. Charity is but the compensation they owe for the inequality of wealth. Before the throne, however, his boldness hesitated, for, like all his contemporaries, he is dazzled and unnerved by the imposing person of the king. It may be said for him that boldness would have been suicidal. His official position as preceptor of the Dauphin precluded independence of thought or freedom of language. He was bound to be a courtier by policy as well as conviction, if he would avoid disgrace and exile. His dogmatism doubtless made it easy to be a courtier, for he is an intense believer in the dominant system in Church and State. He is what we might call a magnificent obscurantist. He is not troubled with doubts, has neither the mind nor the temperament that turns upon its opinions, its prejudices, its instincts, and questions their infallibility. Seldom was there a man with so large, so penetrating an eye, so satisfied with his beliefs. The conservative and violent bigotry of the age is his ideal of religious truth, the despotism of Louis XIV. the climax of all political development. There can be no doubt at all of these certainties. There is no postern door into his mind for the future. He has no conception of the self-government which futurity hides in its folds, even with the English constitution and the English Revolutions of 1649 and 1689 before his eyes. He sees in contemporary English history only a chaos of disorder, the inevitable fruit of the audacious and schismatic spirit of Protestantism. He dreads, indeed, free-thought and hates free-thinkers, but he has no conception of a state of things on earth like that which the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have brought into being, of toleration, popular government, political self-development. He knows not that already the enemy is at the gates. Bossuet died in 1704, when Voltaire was already ten years of age, and the age of Voltaire will deny his political theory, will attack his religion, will cast down all his idols. Bossuet, meanwhile, continues to dogmatise with all the assurance of the chosen prophet of all time. He is as impatient of criticism, of

opposition, as Richelieu. If Fénélon will persist in patronising Madame Guyon and the Quietists, Fénélon shall forfeit his friendship and suffer persecution. If Père Richard Simon will persist in criticising the books of the Bible in a rationalist spirit, he has the Bishop of Meaux forthwith on his track with the cry of heresy. If Jurieu will maintain the doctrine of the sovereignty of the people in defence of Protestantism, Jurieu shall not merely be refuted, he shall be proscribed. If Père Caffaro takes it into his silly head to defend the theatre, Père Caffaro must forthwith apologise for and disown a work disgraceful, in the opinion of Bossuet, to the priestly profession. If Spinoza and Malebranche cannot see eye to eye with the Bishop of Meaux in philosophy, then adieu to philosophy and its vain parade of human subtlety. Spinoza is an atheist, Malebranche a heretic. Bossuet is Pope of France for half a century, and the God, of whom he is vicar, knows neither toleration nor mercy towards the opponents of His representative on earth.

The "Politic deduced from the Holy Scripture" was composed for the instruction of the Dauphin, then entering on his seventeenth year, that is, towards 1680.[1] It served also for the instruction of the Dauphin's children, and was circulated privately among the bishop's friends at Court. As the title shows, it was an attempt exclusively to construct a political system on the basis of the Bible. It is as much a theological as a political treatise, the political system of a theologian who follows the Scriptures as his guide, and, it must be said, wrests them to suit his purpose. It is a singular example of the agility with which the Bible may be used by different minds. In the sixteenth century the Bible furnishes a Languet with proofs of the doctrine of the sovereignty of the people; in the seventeenth it yields to Bossuet the irrefragable demonstration of Bourbon absolutism. Strange elasticity of mind which has too often made the poor Bible responsible for the vagaries of human imagination.

Though Bossuet professes to be a Biblical politician, he is indebted to the philosophers of both pagan and Christian times for some of his ideas, and draws largely on contemporary history. The system of centralisation which he deduces from the Old Testament is merely the system of Louis XIV. and Colbert at its best. Alongside the Vulgate on his desk (though he does not say so) lie the "Politics" of Aristotle, the "De Jure Belli et Pacis" of Grotius, and the "Leviathan" of Hobbes.

Bible in hand, Bossuet, of course, maintains a high standard of political morality, though, the Bible being no political manual, his

[1] It was not published till 1709.

conception of the State is bound to be narrow and artificial. The strong point of it is the stress laid on the duties as well as the rights of kings. He exaggerates the power of the kingly office with all the enthusiasm of an ardent royalist, but he takes care to emphasise its responsibilities.

Following Grotius, Bossuet declares man to be by nature social and fraternal, and he reminds kings, with ample quotations from Scripture, that their subjects are by nature their brethren. The primitive brotherhood, enjoying community of goods, was disrupted by the corruption of the heart and the multiplication of the race, which occasioned division into different nations. Sovereign government is a necessity of this increase of the race, in order to preserve order and maintain union in the community. To it he ascribes the rise of property. In primitive society property is common, in civil society the right to exclusive possession is derived from public authority, without whose sanction there is no right. Bossuet thus ignores the validity of moral right, and in admitting only a legal title, dependent on public authority, confers on that authority absolute power over the individual. From the outset his bent is thus towards the elevation of the sovereign power at the expense of the individual.

The sovereignty, which is the result of a primitive contract, of mutual agreement, is exercised through the laws, which in their turn rest on two principles, Acknowledge God, and love your neighbour. The authority of the laws does not, however, depend on the consent of the people, and, like Hobbes, he maintains this doctrine in spite of his assumption of a contract. The divine law is inviolable, the civil law should be changed as little as possible. The veneration for ancient maxims leads to the consolidation of society. Respect for private property is a duty towards your fellow-citizen; respect for the rights of other nations a duty towards your fellow-man. Patriotism is one of the chief characteristics of the good citizen, who ought to be ready to sacrifice his property and even his life for his country.

Proceeding to enlarge on authority,[1] he maintains that royal and hereditary authority is the most proper form of government. God is the true king. His empire is eternal and absolute. The divine government is the model of human government. Its first form among men was paternal, and the kingly power naturally developed from the paternal. Ambition and conquest were, he admits, also the means of subjection to kings, but as a rule kings established their power by pacific means. But what of other forms of government

[1] "De l'Autorité; que la royale et l'héréditaire est le plus propre au gouvernement" (liv. ii.).

which have, at least, the merit of antiquity? Bossuet is compelled to admit the legitimacy of all established governments. The people owe allegiance to the sovereign power which has the rule over it, even if that power be republican, and whoever seeks to overthrow it is a public enemy. Monarchy, however, is the most common, the most ancient, the most durable form of government. It is the least susceptible of division, the most compatible with unity. An army commanded by a single chief is the best image of a State ruled by a king. As obedience is the mark of the good soldier, subjection is the mark of the good citizen. "Man is born subject, and the paternal jurisdiction which accustoms him to obey accustoms him at the same time to subjection to a chief." Of all monarchies the best is hereditary, since it tends most to the conservation of the State, inspires love and respect, and stifles envy. Objections start up in the mind of the modern reader at almost every assertion, but as Bossuet hedges himself around with Scripture texts, and leaves no room for discussion, it is hardly worth while arguing with him. He strains his texts, to be sure, but he is on this very account less accessible to reasonable criticism.

Our author next elaborates the nature and properties of the royal authority.[1] It is sacred, since God has established kings as His ministers, and reigns by them over the people. In proof thereof follows a whole army of texts, quoted at discretion. Kings being sacred persons, to do violence to a king is sacrilege. Are they not the representatives of the divine majesty? Are they not the associates of God in the sovereignty? Obedience to the prince is, therefore, a religious duty. As a matter of course the royal authority is absolute. The sovereign is responsible to no one except God for the exercise of the sovereignty. To their subjects "kings are gods and participate in a certain fashion in the divine independence." From their authority there is no appeal, not even to justice, and no remedy, since there is no legitimate coercive force outside their will. What if the exercise of the royal authority is merely a brutal anarchy? There is no help for it on the part of the subject. To contest this authority would be to divide the State and ruin the public peace. For Bossuet, as for Hobbes, whom he follows, the cure would be worse than the disease. "No man can serve two masters." With this curt answer to remonstrance and a few observations on the interest of the prince to conserve the people, the bishop disposes of the grand question of the rights of the subject under an absolute *régime*.

Is the prince, then, superior to the laws? Certainly. He is, at

[1] "La Nature et les Propriétés de l'Autorité Royale."

most, only morally subject to them. He should be guided by the laws, but the laws cannot force him to follow them. Bossuet's knowledge of theological terms enables him to make a nice distinction, which the oppressed subject must doubtless find satisfactory. The king is subject to the laws not in their coactive, but in their directive capacity. He has nothing to fear except evil. His authority is unquestionable and invincible, and ought to be firmly exercised over great and small.

Revolt or revolution is inadmissible.[1] Passive obedience is the duty of the subject. "It is necessary to obey without murmur." The interest of the prince and the interest of the people are one. To love him is to love the public welfare. Resistance is only conceivable when he commands anything contrary to the will of God. The subject may remonstrate respectfully, he may not cease to love his king even if the king persecutes him. In all this there is a strange ignorance of human nature, and a singularly sophistic reading of the Scriptures. Bossuet is, indeed, at times desperately hard put to it to make slavery of this kind even plausible, but he has a happy knack of getting over a difficulty with a sophism or a text which never fails to convince himself. He is determined to be always right whether combating heretics or democrats, and he succeeds in his purpose. The revolt of David against Saul, of the Maccabees against Antiochus, proves nothing. It is the hand of God, not of man, that is at work in these rebellions. The theologian is too much for the dialectician. What if the Huguenots adduce such examples in justification of the right of resistance? Bossuet will escape by replying that what heretics say is of no importance. His constant refrain is—Respect old institutions and change them as little as possible. He forgets that the exhortation cuts two ways. The observance of it would have made the absolutism of Louis XIV., of which he is the exponent and the votary, impossible.

If subjects have no rights, kings at least have duties.[2] On this point Bossuet for once is admirable. The stress laid on the moral ideal which he sets before the ruler is the best thing in the treatise. While repeating the absolute subjection of the people to the king, he pauses frequently to emphasise the moral obligations of the king to the people. The king is bound to use his power in the fear of God and for the public good. He is the father of the people, and ought to rule them with paternal goodness. Goodness is an essentially royal quality, and the highest distinction of greatness. His

1 "Des Devoirs des Sujets envers le Prince" (liv. vi.; cf. liv. ii.).

2 "Des Devoirs de la Royauté" (livs. vii. and viii., cf. iii., iv., v.).

power is legally unlimited, but it has moral limits. God, he says, in effect, is the author of your office, but he is also the prototype of your actions. The prince is not born for himself but for the people. The obligation of caring for the people is the fundamental right of his office. When he neglects the interest of the people for his own, when he makes them the victims of his egotism, he is no king but a tyrant. The true king is influenced neither by the ingratitude of the people nor by his personal resentments, and eschews sanguinary violence. He is clement to all, inflexible only towards the wicked, and his highest felicity is to merit the love of his subjects. The ideal is most exalted. It is unfortunately visionary. Moral obligation has too seldom been a guarantee of good government. If Bossuet had had the eye of the practical observer, he would have perceived that his own age was sufficient to condemn his system of power based, not on law, but on morality. To confer arbitrary power on the monarch, and consign the task of preventing its abuse to the moral philosopher, was poor compensation for robbing the people of political rights.

The royal authority ought to be directed by reason as well as conscience. The wisdom of the king ensures the happiness of the people. Study wisdom, therefore, and apply yourself to learn what is useful for the State; study, before all, yourself, men, affairs. Beware of favourites, beware of confounding obstinacy with firmness, and let firmness be first exercised against your own passions. Take counsel, and allow your counsellors full liberty of opinion. Take advantage of the lessons of history, and accustom yourself to decide only after mature deliberation and prayer. Bossuet, I repeat, is admirable as a moralist, but he should not have written a political treatise.

The aim of government is the conservation and the good of the State. A good constitution is necessary for its conservation, and a good constitution consists in maintaining religion and justice. Religion, of course, means Christianity, and Bossuet is liberal enough to believe that, while other religions are false, they are valid enough to sanctify an oath of allegiance, and thus to keep the miserable idolater in bondage along with his Christian brother. Though these religions do not furnish a pass for the kingdom of heaven, they serve to enforce an argument in favour of despotism. In a Christian State, however, false religions are not allowed even this virtue, and ought to receive no quarter. The prince must employ his authority to destroy them, and the duty is illustrated by examples of Old Testament intolerance. Bossuet is unable to conceive a State in

which a non-Christian cult can coexist with the profession of Christianity, or dissent from the State Church can be tolerated. Persuasion should be employed to win heretics where practicable, but if persuasion fail, force is legitimate and necessary. The king is bound to see that his subjects are instructed in the law of God and to protect the Church, though he is not entitled to interfere with the sacred rights and authority of the priesthood. Blasphemy and sorcery are to be visited with the severest penalties. The king is all the more bound to serve God by protecting His Church, inasmuch as he owes his dignity to God, and is the instrument of His providence in human government—in the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, doubtless.

Justice is the fruit of religion, and it is the prime duty of the monarch to rule justly. The monarchic power is absolute, but it is not arbitrary. It is not limited by the rights of the people, it *is* limited by God, and ought to be limited by the laws. Bossuet thus drags himself from a dilemma by distinguishing between absolute and arbitrary government. The arbitrary monarchy is one in which the individual possesses neither liberty nor property, in which there is no law but the will of the king. An absolute monarchy is one in which the prince governs by the laws, which assure liberty and property. The distinction, unfortunately, in view of the dogma of passive obedience, non-resistance, is one without a difference. If the people may not resist and the king may override the law, where is the difference between absolute monarchy and despotism?

Further, while war has the sanction of God, unjust wars are condemnable. Prosperity, the fruit of peace, is the grand test of wise rule, and in order to maintain prosperity, the monarch may not burden the people with taxes. The true riches of a nation are a prosperous and contented people.[1]

Fénélon is, in many respects, the antithesis of Bossuet. His character, his culture, his theology are of a more mellow type. There is a charm in his amiable and insinuating personality, which is lacking in that of the more rigid and intolerant Bishop of Meaux. Bossuet is a prophet of the Hebrew stamp; Fénélon is a philanthropist whose mind is attracted and formed by the Greek classics. He owed his Grecian culture to the classical education which was begun in the castle of Fénélon in Perigord, where he was born in 1651, and continued at the University of Cahors. It asserted its influence in the first ideal of his life, which was to proceed, after finishing his studies

[1] The fullest biography of Bossuet is that of Cardinal Bausset, the latest and best general estimate of his life and writings is that by Rebelliau.

for the priesthood in the seminary of St Sulpicius at Paris, as a missionary to Greece and the Levant. His plan was inspired by the double desire to succour the oppressed Christians of the East, and to nurture his taste by communion with the great masters amid the ruins of the Acropolis. It remained a mere vision of youthful enthusiasm. Fénélon had to give up romance for the prosaic post of superior of an institution devoted to the education of girls converted from Protestantism—new Catholics as they were called. His zeal subsequently found a special sphere for its exercise as mission preacher to the Protestant population of Saintonge and Poitou. While influenced by the intolerant spirit of the age, he strove to gain the confidence of the people by gentle methods. He was less aggressive than Bossuet, but though he could be both charitable and patient under opposition, he did not at this period understand, nor did he advocate toleration. His activity as an educationist was more in keeping with his humane spirit. Like Montaigne, he to some extent anticipated Rousseau in the plea for natural methods of instruction, which he published about this time in the form of a treatise on the education of girls.

In 1689 he became preceptor to the children of the Dauphin, and applied himself with ardour to the task of forming a model prince. In the Duke of Burgundy he had a most unpromising subject. The violent and ungovernable temper of his pupil called for energetic and judicious treatment. Fénélon succeeded where a man of less attractive and winning personality would have failed. He succeeded, too, in enduing him with an ideal of statesmanship very different from that of Louis XIV. in the latter part of his reign. "Telemachus" and the "Dialogues des Morts," which he composed for his instruction, are replete with sympathy for humanity and justice. It is superfluous to say of "Telemachus" that it is a most charming romance, and reveals the author's rare mastery of the art of making instruction delightful, as well as effective. It would not be fair to Fénélon to regard it as a serious political treatise bearing on contemporary politics, but it could hardly have been written by a man who was a submissive votary of the *régime* of Louis XIV., and we know that at the period of its composition, Fénélon was a trenchant critic of that *régime*. Its surreptitious publication, through the mercenary infidelity of a copyist, gave great offence to Louis and Madame de Maintenon.[1] Louis regarded it as a libel of his government, and the insinuations of Fénélon's enemies

[1] See Bausset's Vie de Fénélon, ii. 169-180. The best short biography of Fénélon is that by Paul Janet.

helped to confirm his dislike of the author, and make his disgrace irrevocable.

It was partly this spirit of latent paganism, partly the divergence of view as to the tenets of Madame Guyon, that ruptured the friendship between Fénélon and Bossuet. Louis sided with Bossuet in his attack on the "Maxims of the Saints," in which Fénélon showed that the Quietistic doctrines of Madame Guyon were the doctrines of the mystics whom the Church had canonised. With the monarch at his back, Bossuet succeeded in extorting from the Pope the condemnation of his book,[1] to which Fénélon humbly submitted. Though he was virtually exiled from court to his archbishopric of Cambrai, he continued to exercise a certain influence on politics, through the Duke of Burgundy and the Dukes of Chevreuse and Beauvilliers, who remained his warm friends. The letters, memoirs on affairs of State, and plans of reform which he wrote to them, display a noble public spirit, and an eager desire to aid in the work of regeneration, which he hoped was reserved for the Duke of Burgundy to accomplish. St Simon traces his public spirit to his ambition.[2] If so, it was ambition of the right stamp, the ambition of governing in order to reform.

Unlike Bossuet, Fénélon did not promulgate a theory of politics. The "Essai Philosophique sur le Gouvernement Civil," written by his friend, the Chevalier Ramsay, professes to be an elaboration of his political principles, but there seems to me to be good grounds for believing that there is as much of Ramsay's as of Fénélon's political philosophy in this compilation. It would, besides, be unfair to charge Fénélon with responsibility for a work which he did not write, especially as the maxims of his undoubted political writings are not in accord with the absolutest theories of the "Essai." It is rather a Jacobite philippic against the English Revolution than a statement of the political meditations of the Archbishop of Cambrai. Fénélon is not a theorist. His political views are the views of what we should call a member of the Opposition. They are critical rather than constructive, and as reflected in the "Examen de Conscience sur les Devoirs de la Royauté," they form a severe indictment of the government of Louis XIV.[3] It was written for the benefit of the Duke of Burgundy, who kept it carefully locked away in his desk. There was only too good reason for secrecy, for Fénélon's criticism is terribly searching. Instead of being carried away by a sense of the majesty of kings to exaggerate their rights, as Bossuet does, he lays stress on

[1] Isambert, xx. 339, 340 (August 1699).

[2] See Mémoires, viii. 420-423, and xi. 57-68.

[3] It is printed in the Œuvres de Fénélon (1824), xxii. 265 *et seq.*

the limits rather than on the rights of the kingly power. Good government is the main thing, and good government is equivalent to just government. It is by this test that he tries the administration of Louis XIV., and it is evident all through that he is of opinion that Louis' administration fails to pass the test. He is no believer in absolute power, though he does not explicitly dogmatise on the point. He confronts the monarch with the rights of the States-General and the Parliaments. "You know that formerly the king took nothing from the people by his sole authority; it was the Parliament—that is, the assembly of the nation—that accorded the funds needful for extraordinary affairs of State. Apart from this exception, he lived on the proceeds of the royal domains. What is it that has changed this order of things but the absolute authority which the kings have usurped? In our days we have the Parliaments, which are courts infinitely inferior to the ancient Parliament or Estates of the realm, remonstrating before registering fiscal edicts. You ought at least to promulgate no such edict without having carefully consulted men incapable of flattering you, and actuated by a veritable zeal for the public good."[1]

"Monarchy regulated by the laws"[2] is Fénélon's ideal. This is the right medium between popular anarchy and arbitrary power. The royal power is constitutionally limited by the States-General, and in order to rule wisely, the sovereign should submit to this limit. He is, in fact, the advocate of parliamentary government on the mediæval, if not on the modern model, and in his reaction from absolutism, he is apparently unable to see a single good feature in the present order of things. He does not mention the name of Louis, yet at every step he deals a blow at his *régime*. He sees in the luxury, the extravagance, the magnificence, the moral laxity of his court, the ruin of the State, and the corruption of society. The fiscal system is a terrible engine of oppression, with its complicated expedients for fleecing the people. The multiplication of offices, for instance, is merely exaction in disguise. The people has to pay with compound interest for the sums obtained by the king from the purchasers of these sinecures. For every 100,000 francs which they pay the king they extort 500,000 out of the people. Equally ruinous is the policy of placing the people at the mercy of a swarm of financiers, farmers-general, and other parasites of the public revenue, who use their privileges to fleece the people and harass commerce. The long wars of Louis are severely condemned as unjust, both to France and Europe. Necessity of State, which is merely a pretext

[1] Œuvres, xxii. 280. [2] *Ibid.*, xxii. 270.

for the royal ambition, is no palliative in Fénélon's eyes. He has an unpleasant knack of looking facts in the face, and is not in the least disconcerted or dazzled by an artificial glory, which he rates at its true value as presumptuous pomposity. How does all this glamour of military show, of wars of conquest, appear in the face of facts? "To force men to serve against their will, to plunge a whole family, deprived of their breadwinner, into misery, poverty, starvation, to tear the labourer from his plough and keep him under arms for ten or fifteen years, during which he perishes of misery in the hospitals for lack of necessary succour, to break his head or cut off his nose if he desert—this nothing can excuse in the sight of God or man."[1] "You hang a poor unfortunate for having stolen a piece of money on the high road in his extreme want, and you treat as a hero the man who has made a conquest, *i.e.*, who has subjugated unjustly the lands of a neighbouring State. The usurpation of a meadow or a vineyard is regarded as an unpardonable sin, in the sight of God, at least if it is not restored, but to rob cities and provinces counts for no sin at all, . . . nay, is an innocent and glorious action. Where, then, are the ideas of justice? Will God judge thus? Should we be less just in great things than in small? . . . All that is taken by conquest is, therefore, taken unjustly, and ought to be restored."[2] The policy of extorting advantageous treaties by threats, of forcing your enemy to recognise unjust claims, is no less reprehensible. It is on a par with the tactics of the robber who extorts money by aiming a pistol at the head of his victim. But is not conquest justifiable for the purpose of strengthening a weak frontier? No, answers Fénélon. Justice is the best defence of a weak frontier. No war, he insists, even a war happily terminated, but causes more evil than good to the State. Would a man undertake a process that must ruin his family, or cause it infinite harm, without considering the risk he runs? If a monarch is just, he may as a rule avoid war, and confidence in his justice will render war exceptional. Justice is further outraged by the practice of inserting ambiguous terms in treaties, which become the fertile seeds of future wars. To offer terms of peace only with the intention of disregarding them at the first opportunity is to invite eternal warfare. The rights of humanity, the rights of nations, as derived from the principles of justice, are, in Fénélon's view, superior to the rights of kings, even if that king be a Louis XIV. The reign of Louis has systematically ignored these rights, and that reign, with its wars of ambition, its bad faith, its Machiavellian diplomacy, its terrible oppression of the people, is, therefore, anything but a model

[1] Œuvres, xxii. 284. [2] *Ibid.*, xxii. 286.

reign. Absolute government has proved a failure even in the hands of its most magnificent representative.

In his conversations with the Pretender, as reported by Ramsay,[1] he reiterates his preference for a government limited by a constitution, for liberty moderated by the laws. "All the nations of the earth are but the different families of the same republic, of which God is the common Father." It is necessary that there should be a sovereign power in the State, but it is equally necessary that the sovereign power, whatever form it may take (and he does not limit that form to absolute monarchy, even by preference, like Bossuet), should be subject to the immutable, the universal law of the general interest. The sovereign authority has all power over the people, but this law, which is antecedent to any contract and is founded on nature, has all power over the sovereign authority. "He who governs ought to be the most subject to this primitive law. . . . The common Father of the great human family has only confided His children to them to render them happy. He wishes that one man" (and here Fénélon seems to have in view only the monarchic form of government) "may by his wisdom minister to the happiness of many men, and not that many men may serve by their misery to flatter the pride of one individual. It is not for himself that God has made him king; it is only that he may be the servant of the people, and he is worthy of royalty only in so far as he forgets himself for the commonweal."[2] He has no sympathy with a government which has ceased to observe this grand law, and is a despotism, in fact, whatever it may be in profession. "The despotic tyranny of sovereigns is an encroachment on the rights of humanity." Whether it be a despotism of one man or of the multitude, it is equally a contravention of these rights, and wisdom consists in finding the medium between these two extremes, whatever the form of government may be. He is not so anxious about the form as about the fruit of government. "All forms of government are necessarily imperfect, since we can only confide the supreme authority to men. All are good when those who govern serve the grand law of the public interest. In theory certain forms may appear better than others; in practice the weakness or the corruption of men, subject to the same passions, expose all States to almost equal inconveniences. Two or three men almost always dominate the monarch or the senate."[3] He has a nervous dread of violent remedies for abuses. Whatever the form of government, he would rather suffer the evils of misgovernment than face the horrors of its violent dissolution.

[1] See Œuvres, xxii. 315 *et seq.* [2] *Ibid.*, 316. [3] *Ibid.*, 317, 318.

"One will not achieve the millennium by changing, overturning established forms, but in inspiring sovereigns with the thought that the security of their empire depends on the happiness of their subjects, and in impressing the peoples that their solid and true happiness demands subordination. Liberty without order is libertinage, which brings with it despotism. Order without liberty is slavery, which loses itself in anarchy. One ought to teach princes that power without limits is a madness which ruins their proper authority. When sovereigns accustom themselves to know no laws but their absolute wills, they sap the foundation of their power. There will come a sudden and violent revolution, which, far from merely moderating their excessive authority, will destroy it without resource."[1] To forestall such a deplorable event, he would, on the other hand, teach the people forbearance towards kings, and would fain conciliate the liberty of the people with the obedience due to the sovereign, which, by the way, he uses sometimes to express the monarchy, sometimes the supreme authority, whatever its form. But if things go from bad to worse, revolution, he sees, is inevitable.

He is liberal enough to perceive the good side of English parliamentary institutions, and counsels the Pretender to be satisfied with being a parliamentary king. The Parliament, he remarks, can do nothing without you, if you can do nothing without the Parliament. "Every wise prince ought to wish to be only the executor of the laws, and to have a supreme council which moderates his authority." Before all let him eschew religious bigotry and intolerance. "Do not force your subjects to change their religion," he exhorts, with the experience of the revocation of the Edict of Nantes to give point to the exhortation. "No human power has a right to force the curtailment of the liberty of the human heart. Force can never persuade men; it only makes them hypocrites. When kings interfere with religion, instead of protecting it, they reduce it to slavery. Accord to all civil toleration, not while approving all as indifferent, but suffering all that God suffers, and trying to regain men by a gentle persuasion."[2]

Fénélon's place as a political writer is thus the place of a member of the Opposition. He is an opponent of the government of Louis XIV., a reformer, not a revolutionist. He is the apostle of reaction rather than of progress, though this reaction would in some respects have been progressive. It would to some extent have vindicated the rights of the people from the absolute domination which had destroyed all political liberty. Fénélon would revive these, he would

[1] Œuvres, xxii. 318. [2] *Ibid.*, 319.

go back to the old constitution with some modifications, as we have seen in his "Plans de Gouvernement." His political sympathies are with the past, and he has no conception of the democracy of the future.

The Duke of St Simon and the Count of Boulainvilliers[1] belong to the same category of reformers on paper. They agree with Fénélon in limiting the royal power, and claim for the nobility the exclusive management of affairs, in place of the new men whom Louis preferred for ministerial office. St Simon, in particular, would fain see the higher posts of State reserved for noble dukes like himself. His hobby is his dignity as a duke and peer of the realm, which he almost equates with royalty itself, and it is part of that dignity to rule the State in co-operation with the king. "My dearest and most consuming passion," he wrote, "is that of my dignity and my rank." This craze detracts from the value of the paper constitution with which he beguiled the tedium of waiting for office until the advent of the regent. He was not a *persona grata* at court, though he could not live away from Versailles. Madame de Maintenon called him a "Frondeur, full of views"; and he only enjoyed one blink of favour during the short interval between the death of the Dauphin and that of his son, the Duke of Burgundy. He was one of the duke's intimate friends, and it was for his benefit primarily that he expounded his "Projects of Government,"[2] in his secret interviews with the heir-presumptive. His claim to distinction rests more on his powers as a writer than on his merit as a politician. His "Memoirs" have many defects, but they possess rare merits. He is not impartial, is very vindictive, and often trivial. He devotes too much space to the mere record of court ceremony and intrigue. He is pre-eminently the gentleman's historian, and would have made a capital editor of the court news or historiographer royal of the narrow type. He knows all about pedigrees, precedence, fashions, orders. He is master of the gossip of his time. Yet, in spite of his tendency to lay stress on trifles, he is a great writer and even a great historian. He is a master of portraiture; his epoch lives in his pages, and he can, on occasion, rise above his environment, and depict men and events from a wider standpoint than that of a hanger-on at court. He is no mere Dangeau. While he shows us the splendour of the court of Louis XIV., he also shows us the servility of the courtiers. Though a devotee of birth, rank, and privilege, he preaches self-respect, and denounces the servile crowd of mean souls,

[1] Histoire de l'Ancien Gouvernement de la France.

[2] Published by M. Paul Mesnard.

who worship the monarch, denounces, too, the tyranny, vanity, arrogance of the monarch himself. The note of revolt against a servile and hypocritical generation is one of the best features of his twenty volumes. He dares to be independent, and sometimes to show his independence outside the privacy of his *entresol* in the palace. In his small aristocratic soul there is no large human sympathy, but there certainly is a critical ability which lifts him above the plane of the artificial, servile society in which he mingles. If only he could have risen above himself, and looked at men and things with a less prejudiced, jaundiced eye, his merits as historian would have been of the very highest order.

The age which witnessed the climax of absolute power in France was also an age of marked progress in philosophical inquiry and speculation. In the seventeenth century the critical spirit, born of the Renascence, took its first bold flight into the world of ideas. The names of Descartes and Bacon are the names of original thinkers who threw off the last shred of allegiance to Aristotle and the schoolmen, and gave definite form to the reaction of the preceding century in the study of man and nature. The Reformation went a certain length in the assertion of the right of the individual against the authority of tradition in theology. It was left to Bacon and Descartes to carry this reaction to its logical issue in the domain of science and philosophy. A fact of vast significance not merely in the domain of science and philosophy, but in that of politics as well.

Descartes left the Jesuit college of La Flèche, in which he was educated, with a painful sense of his own ignorance. This feeling was not the result of the incapacity or neglect of his teachers, or of his own want of ability and diligence. The cause of his dissatisfaction lay in the method and matter of instruction. "I found myself," he says, referring to the completion of his studies, "embarrassed with so many doubts and errors that it seemed to me that the instruction I had received had profited no further than to discover to me my own ignorance."[1] Philosophy, in fact, appeared to him such a mass of contradictions that it was impossible that the wisdom of the schools could be true wisdom. As to theology, its doctrines were so far beyond the reach of reason that only the extraordinary assistance of Heaven could lead to truth. Descartes resolved to abandon entirely the tradition of the schools, and to seek truth in reflection and observation, in the study of himself and "the great book of the world." His motive in so doing was "an extraordinary desire to

[1] Discours de la Méthode pour bien conduire sa Raison et chercher la Verité dans les Sciences, avec Introduction par B. Aube, p. 12.

learn to distinguish the true from the false in order to see clearly and walk with assurance through life."[1] In pursuit of this aim he became an officer in the army of Prince Maurice in Holland. It was a singular profession for a philosopher to adopt, but it was admirably fitted to realise the plan of studying men and things, instead of books and systems. After taking part in the opening campaigns of the Thirty Years' War and using his opportunities of a roving soldier's life to make the acquaintance of the *savants* of Holland and Germany, he sheathed his sword and continued his travels in the countries of the north as well as in Italy. He ultimately found a fatherland in Holland. "There is no country in the world," he wrote in explanation of his choice, "where one is freer." His dislike of controversy and his fear of persecution explain his preference. In Holland he passed the greater part of his manhood, but even in Holland his prudence and tolerance failed to secure him against the attacks of Calvinist orthodoxy. He was accused of atheism —rationalism would have been the more correct term—and was only saved the pain of having his books burned by the common hangman by the intervention of the French ambassador. The vaunted liberty of Holland proving illusory, he accepted the invitation of Queen Christina of Sweden, and died at Stockholm in 1650, a few months after his arrival.

Descartes represents the revolt against the conventions of the schools, as Rousseau represents the revolt against the conventions of society. Return to self, is his motto; and this motto, though meant only to apply to philosophy, is the "return to nature" of Rousseau. Descartes' philosophy is based on the maxim that what is conventional is not authoritative. The only authority for man, in philosophy, is his own mind, reasoning independently and correctly. His "method" is the guide which shall enable it to reason independently and correctly, and lead it to the truth. "I think," is the starting point both of his method and his system. What Aristotle or other masters may think is indifferent. He has no sympathy with the past. His belief is in himself and the future, and the future was to owe much both to his method and his system. His philosophy lies outside my province. The proof of human personality in virtue of thought, of the existence of God in virtue of the idea of perfection, of the reality of the external world in virtue of our apprehension of it, are propositions for the metaphysicians to dispute or expound. His principle of the sole authority of reason, of clearness and distinctness as the test of truth, is of universal interest, because of

[1] Discours de la Méthode, p. 15.

universal application. His philosophy was destined to be eclipsed by that of Locke, who discarded innate ideas, and sought their origin in sensation and reflection. In the domain of metaphysics Locke, not Descartes, was to be the master of the eighteenth century. But the philosophy of Locke, as well as that of Spinoza, Hume, Kant, is the outcome of the spirit of independent criticism enunciated by Descartes. Locke in particular was largely indebted to his French predecessor. "The first books which gave him a relish for philosophical things, as he has often told me," wrote Lady Masham, "were those of Descartes."[1] Accept nothing as true which you do not recognise as evidently so, which is not so clear and distinct that it is impossible to doubt—this is the principle which evolved in pantheism, materialism, scepticism, and most other "isms" of modern times. It is the only principle compatible with reason. It is the enemy of prejudice and tradition, and as such it is nothing less than revolutionary. In its revolutionary operation it will not only make sport of the systems of dead doctors, but will examine and judge the whole complex of nature and human life.

Descartes was, however, no revolutionist. He had a mortal hatred of controversy, and not over much moral courage in asserting his opinions. He professed the utmost respect for Church and State. He deprecated the use of reason in political and theological criticism. He was most obsequious to the powers that be, and while he shocked his friends at times with his rather free views of inspiration, he wished to pass for an orthodox Christian and a good churchman. He believed in the motion of the earth round the sun, and knew that Galileo was right, but he withheld the publication of his "Traité du Monde" for fear of sharing his fate. He was too tolerant and too timid a man to be an apostle. He was a pure thinker, not a practical reformer; being of opinion that reformation is the function of "those whom God has established as sovereigns over the nations." "I by no means approve those meddlesome and restless natures, who not being called by fortune or birth to the management of public affairs, are never weary proposing schemes of reformation, and if I thought that there would be the least matter in this discourse, which should impute to me the suspicion of such folly, I should be very sorry to suffer its publication."[2] In religion he is satisfied with the faith of his nurse and his king; in politics, while he would willingly adjust society in accordance with pure reason, if he had the power, he is content to be an opportunist. "It is necessary to obey the laws of one's country," and to amend

[1] See Campbell Fraser's Locke, p. 12.

[2] Méthode, p. 18.

abuses, not by radical changes, but by degrees. One does not demolish a whole city in order to embellish it. "Great political bodies are too difficult to reconstitute after being overthrown, and their fall cannot but occasion rude shocks." He has no other aim than to reform his own mind and build on his own foundation.

This conciliatory opportunism did not preserve his system from persecution. Before his death his reputation was European. He had become the leader of a distinct school, and counted a large number of disciples in France and Holland. His philosophy was applauded not merely in the Parisian salons, where novelty of speculation was welcome, but by some of the religious orders. He had enthusiastic partisans among the Oratorians, the Benedictines, and the Congregation of Port Royal. Arnauld, Nicole, Malebranche were his followers and champions. Even the Jesuits were at first favourable to his doctrines. Bossuet and Fénélon showed the trace of his influence in their philosophical writings. Reaction, inspired by the Jesuits, came at last, however. Cartesianism was excluded from the universities and the colleges, and in 1663, the works of the master were placed on the Index at Rome, *donec corrigantur*. In 1667, when his remains were translated from Stockholm to Paris, Père Lallemand was forbidden to pronounce his eulogy. Independence of thought was incompatible with absolutism on the throne and tradition in the Church, and the teaching of Descartes, in spite of himself, was too dangerous a handle for political reaction and heresy to enjoy immunity from persecution.[1]

Much has been written on the literary glory of the reign of Louis XIV. It was undoubtedly an age of brilliant literary effort, and part of its inspiration is due to the personality of the monarch. His self-exaltation produced an elevating effect on the brilliant minds of his court. It was contagious and nurtured the ambition of distinction, the desire to excel in literature as in other professions. In Louis the age seemed to have found the ideal after which it aspired. It is the ideal of order, majestic order, evolved out of a period of dissension, partisanship, revolt, anarchy. It was Louis' good fortune to come on the scene at the right moment, as it was Napoleon's after him. The Fronde made Louis possible, as the Revolution made Napoleon necessary. Napoleon possessed far greater ability, but Louis certainly possessed the ability to impose obedience, the address to absorb all reputation as his own, and the love of glory of the spectacular kind that for a time pleased a people

[1] For Descartes' life, see the excellent monograph by A. Fouillée; cf. Nisard, Histoire de la Littérature Française, ii. 44-106.

amorous of display. This ideal found its expression in the literature of the time. "The solar countenance of the monarch," to use the expression of an adulatory abbé, is reflected by it; it breathes both the ideal and spirit of the man and the age. It is the literature of autocracy, the literature of a period of strict censorship, and it has the defects of such. Great it undoubtedly is from the standpoint of literary art, but it is lacking in the higher excellence of self-assertion, of independence, of bold originality. It is too slavish, too adulatory, too courtly, too exaggerative. The exaggerations are too palpable even in the midst of a court. When a poet, and that poet La Fontaine, who was an unsuccessful candidate for royal favour, can exclaim, "Jupiter takes from thee lessons in grandeur," the poet is certainly prostituting his imagination to flattery, and not writing true poetry. When Boileau goes so far as to apostrophise the monarch as the sole object of his admiration, it is difficult not to feel that the poet is racking his muse for mere words without true sentiment. There is too much of this artificial, obsequious note to spoil both poems and sermons, too little of that genuine throb of the human heart which is the real test of literary greatness. Racine has a generous sentiment occasionally on behalf of oppressed humanity, but they are lost amid the nauseating plaudits of his muse which changes its tone to suit the *rôle* of his hero as libertine or bigoted devotee. La Bruyère has a frank sentence here and there against the servility which would attribute to the monarch absolute power even over the property of his subjects, and speaks his mind freely about the rights of peoples. La Fontaine is specific as to the abuses rampant under his absolute potentates among the lower animals, and disputes with Racine against the assumptions of kings. But neither La Bruyère nor La Fontaine are favourites at court. If Molière lashes the *Marquis* with his wit, and holds up the Jesuits to scorn, it is because Louis will enjoy the laugh at the Marquis' expense, and has at this epoch no love for the Jesuits. Of the historians Mezeray, and he historiographer royal, ventures to be independent and outspoken on the wrongs inflicted on France by its kings, but Mezeray loses his pension in consequence. Mabillon, Ducange, Tillemont confine their ponderous industry mostly to the past, and St Simon is as yet only taking notes. Some of the preachers, notably Bourdaloue, who, in the phrase of Madame de Sévigné, "keeps straight on his course, run who may," are fearless and uncompromising, but the note of adulation is the dominant note of court sermons.[1]

[1] For an estimate of the literature of the period, see Nisard, Histoire de la Littérature Française, ii. 407-483. Nisard is, however, not discriminating at times.

In speaking of the literary glory of the reign of Louis, it is necessary to discriminate between the authors who flourished before and after 1661. Only Racine, Boileau, La Bruyère, Le Sage, Madame Sévigné belong to the grand period of the reign. Before Louis took the reins of government into his own hands in 1661, Corneille, who knows no magnificent master, and is in all respects himself, had written his masterpieces; Molière and La Fontaine had reached middle age. Still, the fact remains that Louis had an interest in literature, if only as an adjunct to his glory, and his influence had a refining effect on literary form. He pensioned distinguished authors, he lived on terms of intimacy with some of them, nay—enormity which makes St Simon shudder—he even invited them to his table. He gave literature a standing which it had never enjoyed previously. After Louis XIV., it was no longer necessary for a man of quality to apologise for the condescension of writing books. "Here I am," said he, "dining with Molière, whom my officers do not find good enough company for them." After this, it is hardly to be wondered at that Jupiter is no match for him in greatness. Molière had not only the honour of a dinner, he could enjoy the pleasure of turning the laugh, under royal protection, against some of these supercilious personages to whom rank and uniform were of more consideration than the solid merits of intellectual excellence. Louis, however, took care to get value for his patronage. His generosity to foreign as well as French writers,[1] artists, *savants*, was bestowed with an eye to his own glorification as much as to the recognition and advancement of merit. Colbert, Chapelain, Pellison, were always on the alert to discover a probable panegyrist of their master. The more mercenary of these scribblers knew where their market was, and made many a louis d'or out of the vanity of the *grand roi*. It is an unfortunate feature of this eagerness to reward genius that it stooped to catch the *gaspillage* of the poetaster home and foreign, and carefully calculated the reputation to be gained from the favour bestowed on more solid claims to distinction. Even Louis XIV. and Colbert stooped to the commercial art of "puffing." A literature "made to order" may have its excellences, but nature, not Louis XIV., is the only true patron of literary greatness.

The reign undoubtedly gave an impulse to culture. It was the preparation for the eighteenth century, with its clubs and salons. It inspired a taste for cultivated conversation, and the conversa-

[1] There is a list of persons on whom Louis conferred pensions in Œuvres de Louis XIV., i. 223-225.

tion embraced questions of philosophy, belles lettres, science, even politics. We already discover the germs of eighteenth-century liberalism, notably in the *esprits forts*, a small clique of free-thinkers who met at the Temple under the patronage of the Duke of Vendôme and his brother, the Grand Prior, who, according to St Simon, had for forty years never gone sober to bed. Its philosophy was the epicureanism of Gassendi, its theology an easy-going deism. Its morality was in keeping with its scepticism. The supper parties of the Grand Prior were animated by the sparkle of champagne and a wit not too refined. Abbé Chaulieu was its poet, Ninon de L'Enclos its patron goddess, and among its later *habitués* was the precocious Arouet, subsequently known by the redoubtable name of Voltaire. In spite of the apathy of Louis XIV., there was considerable ground for the apprehension of Bossuet. The *esprits forts* may appear merely an insignificant reaction of libertines against the *régime* of the *dévots*, but other voices, besides that of the Abbé Chaulieu, are heard declaiming on the vanity of all beliefs, religious as well as philosophical. That of Pierre Bayle, for instance, who has a better title to be heard both as man and as thinker, who has suffered exile to Holland for his Protestant faith, and has lost a brother, a Huguenot pastor, killed by misery in the Château Trompette. Pierre Bayle has some reason for this scepticism which makes war on religious dogmatism and fanaticism, whether Catholic or Protestant, and emphasises morality as the only certainty to a reasonable mind. This spirit of aggressive and serious assault might well make Bossuet pessimistic.

SOURCES OF THIS CHAPTER.—Grotius, De Jure Pacis et Belli, translated into English by W. Whewell, D.D.; Richelieu, Testament Politique; Mémoires and other political writings of Cardinal Retz; Bossuet, Politique Tirée de l'Écriture Sainte; Vie de Bossuet, par Cardinal Bausset; Rebelliau, Vie de Bossuet in the series of Grands Écrivains de la France; Fénélon, Télémache, Dialogues des Morts, Examen de Conscience sur les Devoirs de la Royauté, Conversations with the Pretender, as reported by the Chevalier Ramsay, in his Œuvres (1824); Ramsay, Essai Philosophique sur le Gouvernement Civil, purporting to give the political views of Fénélon and printed in his Œuvres; Bausset, Vie de Fénélon; Janet, Vie de Fénélon in the series of Grands Écrivains; Janet, Histoire de la Science Politique, ii.; Boulainvilliers, Histoire de l'Ancien Gouvernement de la France; St Simon, Political Projects in his Mémoires; Descartes, Discours de la Méthode, etc., avec Introduction par B. Aube; Fouillée, Descartes; Nisard, Histoire de la Littérature Française, ii.; Œuvres de Louis XIV.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### The Regent Orleans and John Law—Speculation and Reform (1715-1720).

THE eighteenth century is for France, in many respects, the antithesis of the seventeenth. In the latter absolutism asserts its supremacy and reaches its zenith, in the former freedom combats absolutism and wins the battle. The Parliaments reassert their right of remonstrance, Rousseau advocates the sovereignty of the people, the middle-class accumulates wealth and gains in influence Protestantism demands civil rights, free-thought sets at naught the censor and questions authority in Church and State. Even on the threshold of the century the reaction against the theory of Bossuet and the system of Louis XIV. has set in, and this reaction waxes in strength with every fresh decade, until at last it becomes too powerful for the forces of authority and tradition. The sixteenth century seems to renew its youth. French history in the eighteenth century is, in fact, what English history was in the seventeenth, as English history in the sixteenth century is what French history was in the seventeenth.

Reaction took the earliest opportunity of asserting itself in the nullification of Louis' will. The spell of his personality vanished with himself. His testament was treated with as scant respect by the Parliament of Paris as that of his father had been. It directed the appointment of a Council of Regency, of which the Duke of Orleans was to be merely the president, with one vote, while the Duke of Maine was to have the custody of the young king and the command of the household troops. The ambition of Orleans, the resentment of the Parliament proved stronger than the last behests of an unpopular monarch, whom death, as he sadly anticipated, had made less powerful than the least of his subjects. Even before his death intrigue had been active in the endeavour to circumvent his dispositions. Orleans, whom Louis disliked, had been playing the game of checkmate against Maine, whom he favoured. He had on his side all the malcontents of a reign whose end was clouded by failure, and

the malcontents were legion. Most significant was the fact that the Parliament was for him to a man, and on the 2nd September, when the duke repaired to the Palais de Justice to claim the regency, his claim was admitted with acclamation. The Parliament had no hesitation in discarding the will of the late king, and proclaiming him regent with the most ample powers, including the command of the household troops.[1] His rival, Maine, was subsequently further deprived of the right to the succession to the throne which his father had arbitrarily conferred on him. Maine appealed in vain to "the contract of sovereignty entered into between the nation and the reigning family." The crown, he argued, being conferred by the people on a certain family, with the object of preserving the tranquillity of the nation, any act which tends to prevent the extinction of the royal family must be deemed consonant with the national interests. Though the argument is weak, it is interesting as showing that the doctrine of sovereignty by divine right was beginning to recede into the background, and that the doctrine of a contract as the basis of sovereignty, enunciated by Languet and elaborated by Locke, had entered into the arena of practical political discussion even in the France of Louis XIV. The appeal to the States-General, with whom, in the duke's opinion, lay the decision of such a question rather than with the Council or the Parliament, had evidently already become a favourite expedient for the solution of large questions affecting the national interests. France did not for the first time in 1789 call for the States-General when face to face with a period of crisis. The States-General is the resort of its would-be reformers all through the century, and if the circumstances had been favourable, the National Assembly might have been sitting at Versailles in 1715 instead of 1789. The princes of the blood, in their counter-memorial, are equally explicit on the right of the nation, in the matter of the sovereignty, as against the assumptions of absolutism. They insist that the doctrine that the king has a right to do as he pleases, and therefore to legitimate his natural children, is a most dangerous assumption. Their contentions prevailed, and the denial of arbitrary power received most explicit expression in the edict of 1st July 1717, declaring the Duke of Maine and the Count of Toulouse incapable of succeeding to the throne. It emphasised, in contrast to the absolutist maxims of Louis XIV., the right of election inherent in the people, *i.e.*, the States-General, and the limitation of the power of the monarch by the fundamental laws of the kingdom.[2]

[1] Mémoires de St Simon, xii. 200-213.

[2] See *ibid.*, xiii. 376 *et seq.*; Mémoires Secrets de Duclos, 169-172; cf. 206-219.

The regent was urged to summon the States-General for the deliberation of far more important questions. The great day of effective reform had dawned at last, with a man of liberal sentiments at the helm of affairs, and ever so many men at his elbow with their pockets stuffed full of reform schemes. Now was the grand chance for the realisation of the projects of a Fénélon, a St Simon, an Abbé St Pierre, and other paper politicians, and the paper politicians seemed to have found in the Duke of Orleans a man after their own hearts. There shall be a clean sweep of the bureaucratic system which oppressed the country and had paid so little attention to St Simon and St Pierre. The enormous power of the ministers of State shall be diminished, nay, abolished outright. The management of affairs shall be placed under the control of a number of administrative councils. To crown all, the States-General shall forthwith be assembled. The duke promptly conceded the experiment of governing by a series of committees, instead of ministers, and established councils for the administration of war, marine, finance, foreign affairs, ecclesiastical affairs, and the interior.[1] He listened to the demand for the States-General, nodded approval to all that St Simon said, hesitated, and finally took fright at the spectre of a National Assembly, which he might not be strong enough to control. Probably his decision was, in the circumstances, a wise one. The results would have been disappointing enough. France was at the beginning of the eighteenth century as unripe for parliamentary government as it had been at the beginning of the seventeenth. The call for the States-General was, moreover, the call of reactionary politicians, who would fain have revived all or nearly all the paraphernalia of feudal privilege and abuse. The memoirs of St Simon show sufficiently that, while paper politicians were plentiful, there was little political experience or capacity to lend them ballast. Questions of etiquette bulked far more in the minds of would-be aristocratic reformers like himself than the reform of national abuses. When Cardinal de Rohan, for instance, claimed a seat at the council board next to the princes of the blood, the dukes and marshals declined to attend. Another great controversy of the day grew out of the momentous question whether the first president of the Parliament or a duke should first doff his hat when the Parliament met in solemn session. The question of the bonnet was fought with all the animosity and intensity of a regular campaign. This spirit of petty jealousy for the rights of precedence, of orders, would alone have made the States-General a fiasco, which St Simon would have taken at least half a score of

[1] St Simon, xiii. 213; cf. Isambert, xxi. 38-40.

volumes to recount. The regent might well quail at the prospect of a St Simon perorating on the dignity of his order and demonstrating its inherent right to dominate the State as well as the States-General. He contented himself for the present with the restoration to the Parliament of the right of remonstrance, before the registration of edicts, which had virtually been in abeyance since the ordinances of 1667 and 1673.[1] The administrative councils were not a success, and the muddle of business which ensued compelled the regent to abolish them after a three years' trial, and reinstate the secretaries of State at the head of each department.[2]

The duke struck a high note in his inaugural address to the Parliament. "I assure you that I shall merit this honour by my zeal for the service of the king and my love of the public good, especially as I shall have the benefit of your counsel and your remonstrances. I ask these in advance, while protesting to this august assembly that I shall have no other design than to relieve the people, re-establish order in the finances, retrench superfluous expenses, maintain peace within and without the kingdom, restore union and tranquillity to the Church, and finally work with all the application of which I am capable for all that can render a State prosperous."[3] "I wish to be independent only in order to do good," he added at a later part of the sitting; "I consent to be bound as much as you will, so as to prevent me from doing evil."[4] These politic utterances were intended to gain votes, but they nevertheless expressed the real sentiments of the speaker. By interest and principle the duke was the opponent of the late *régime*. His personality was in itself the antithesis of that of Louis XIV. He was a man of culture, more or less extensively versed in many branches of literature, science, and art, a free-thinker, in sympathy with new ideas, impatient of the limitations of tradition and prejudice, ready to welcome reforms of almost revolutionary import, and give them the benefit of experiment. In manner, too, there could not be a greater contrast than that between Louis XIV. and his nephew. The duke was an easy-going man of the world, the most affable, approachable, unconventional, hilarious, and kind-hearted of princes. He hated the cumbrous ceremony of a court,[5] and was happiest when at his ease behind a

[1] Isambert, xxi. 40, 41.

[2] Mémoires of St Simon, xvi. 104 (1718).

[3] Isambert, xxi. 5.

[4] *Ibid.*, xxi. 20; cf. Mémoires de Noailles, iii. 118-123 (Petitot and Monmerqué), and Mémoires de Villars, iv. 66-76 (Soc. de l'Hist. de France).

[5] Mémoires de D'Argenson, i. 22.

locked door with his boon companions. Even his trusty henchman, St Simon, could not infuse into his soul a proper sense of his dignity or the dignity of dukes in general. He was a most incorrigible heretic in regard to points of etiquette. St Simon was equally impotent to convert him from the moral irregularities of his private life.[1] The failure of the ducal zeal in the attainment of this laudable project is most regrettable, inasmuch as his excesses ultimately impaired his mental activity and helped materially to blight the promise of large reform and good government. He was in truth an unblushing epicurean and cynic. The scepticism and dissipation of the society of the Palais Royal had been the scandal of Paris and the horror of Louis XIV. They were not diminished now that Orleans virtually occupied Louis' place. He was indeed quite systematic in his orgies. The business of the day over, the evening and part of the night were given up to debauchery at the Palais Royal or the Luxemburg, the residence of his daughter, the Duchess de Berry. At the one or the other of these palaces the duke and his *roués*, or rakes, as he dubbed his companions in debauch, met to sup, drink, play, talk obscenity with mistresses and opera girls, until excess produced stupor or sent its votaries reeling to a drunkard's couch. The excesses of his daughter were so gross that they became notorious even in such a society. The spasmodic attempts to keep up appearances with the public by an occasional display of religion, say about Easter time, only aggravated the shamelessness of this habitual devotion to low pleasures. "God," said Madame de Sabran to the regent, "after having created man, took a piece of mud out of which he formed the souls of princes and lackeys." Orleans only laughed at this sally. Complaisance under criticism was one of his characteristics. The curé of St Côme having delivered a pointed sermon against the excesses of the Palais Royal, "What business has he to interfere?" quoth Philip, "I do not belong to his parish." His mother characterised her son in a sentence when she said, "He has all the talents except that of making a good use of them."[2] It was unfortunately one of his talents to set the fashion towards that corruption of morals, that degradation of family morality which is an ugly characteristic of French social life in the eighteenth century.

With all his faults the duke must be regarded as, in some respects, a remarkable man, and if he is not entitled to distinction for what he accomplished, he deserves some credit for what he intended to accomplish. The short period of his rule, which lasted from 1715 to

[1] See Mémoires of St Simon, xii. 440-447.

[2] Mémoires of Duclos, 124, and see St Simon.

1723, is particularly interesting from this point of view. M. Michelet has seen in it "a century in eight years."[1] It appears to him as the first act of the great drama of the Revolution. Michelet is somewhat rhapsodical at times and prone to exaggeration, yet the administration of the duke witnessed a change of policy which augured for a time the realisation of reforms of enormous portent. He was the friend of peace, retrenchment, toleration, and if he had been a man of stronger will and more serious caste of mind, and had not debauched himself into an early grave, France might have been spared the Revolution. At the outset we meet the trace of antagonism to the past at every step. Père Le Tellier was relegated to La Flèche,[2] and with his retirement the Jesuits lost their influence. The moderate Abbé Fleury became royal confessor,[3] and Cardinal Noailles, the opponent of the Jesuits and the Bull Unigenitus, president of the Council of Conscience.[4] The State prisons were opened, and the victims of intolerance and despotism, some of whom had languished for thirty years in the Bastille or Vincennes—for what cause neither they nor any one else knew—regained their liberty.[5] "Among the *lettres de cachet*" (arbitrary warrants of arrest), says St Simon, "there were some very strange cases, which brought to light the deplorable misfortune of the prisoners as well as the tyranny of the late reign and its ministers. Among those incarcerated at the Bastille, for instance, there was one man who had been arrested thirty-five years before, on the day on which he arrived at Paris on his travels from Italy, to which he belonged. He never knew the reason of his arrest, and like most of the others had never been judicially interrogated. . . . When his release was announced to him he demanded sadly what they meant to do with him, saying that he had not a single sou in his possession, and knew not a single soul or a single street in Paris, that his relatives in Italy were likely enough all dead since his departure, that his property had probably been distributed during the long years of his absence, and that he did not know what would become of him. He asked to be allowed to remain in the Bastille for the rest of his life. His request was granted, with food and lodging and full liberty to do as he pleased into the bargain." Certainly it was a noble impulse that levelled this gloomy monument of Bourbon despotism with the ground seventy-five years later, and the fact that, in spite of such abominable despotism, so damning to the autocracy of Louis XIV., it was allowed to stand as a sure receptacle

[1] Hist. de France, xvii., p. 1.
[2] Méms. de St Simon, xvi. 203-206.
[3] Méms. de St Simon, xiii. 187, 188.
[4] Isambert, xxi. 71.
[5] St Simon, xii. 220, 221; Duclos, 130.

for obnoxious advocates of new ideas, shows how far we still are from the Revolution of which M. Michelet so enthusiastically speaks. The Protestants, who cried in vain for the return from Babylonian captivity, were only too early to realise that the day of civil and religious freedom was not yet. In other respects, however, the dawn of an active reforming era was unmistakable, though the noonday was long in coming. The Duke of Noailles, the president of the Council of Finance, of which Villeroy was the nominal chief,[1] grappled with the difficult task of financial reform in the spirit, if not with the ability, of a Sully and a Colbert. He suppressed a host of court appointments and fiscal offices, abated the *tailles*, suppressed the tenth, reduced or abolished a large number of pensions, restricted exemption from the *gabelle* and the *aides*, etc.[2] The difficulty of his task was enormously enhanced by the mountain of debt, exceeding two thousand millions of livres,[3] which Louis XIV. bequeathed to his successor. With a net revenue of sixty-nine millions, the deficit for the year 1715 stood at seventy-eight millions. The outlook was so desperate that St Simon counselled the immediate convocation of the States-General in order to repudiate, by its authority, the obligations of the State to its creditors. The debts contracted by the late king are not, he argued, binding on his successor. Let the States-General authoritatively formulate the proposition, and the debt will vanish as by the touch of a magician. The State creditors being but a small faction of financial swindlers, what dishonour can there be in such a breach of public faith? Even if the morality of the proceeding be doubtful, the States-General will take the blame and the odium of it off your shoulders. St Simon was not a financial genius; he could never, on his own confession, master the simplest rules of arithmetic, and the regent resisted the seduction of his plausible reasonings.[4] Noailles had recourse instead to the expedient of a commission, known as the *visa*, to liquidate the debt. The commission scored off some hundreds of millions by the exercise of its arbitrary will, but the outcry and hostile intrigues of the financiers minimised the benefits of the operation, and Noailles determined to attack their ill-gotten gains on another tack. He hit on an expedient, not unknown to Sully and Colbert, for the punishment of fraudulent speculators and farmers-general, and the recovery of the sums dis-

[1] Isambert, xxi. 61.

[2] See Mémoires de Noailles, iii. 129-131, 140, 141; cf. Isambert, xxi. 48, 85, 117, etc.

[3] Bailly, Histoire Financière, ii. 43.

[4] See Mémoires, xi. 293-303.

trained from the revenue, viz., a chamber of justice.[1] But Noailles was no Colbert or Sully, and his chamber of justice was a mere farce, in spite of the most severe penalties fulminated against guilty speculators and corrupt officials who should attempt to hinder their own denunciation, or make false statements. Encouragement was given to informers, even to the extent of making depositions under false names, and of promising a share of confiscated property.[2] Bribery paralysed even these terroristic methods. A timely present to some grand dame in high credit at the Palais Royal, and the corrupt speculator, who had swindled the government to the extent of millions perhaps, might snap his fingers at the chamber of justice. "Faith, my lord, you come too late," replied a contractor, whose defalcations were estimated at 1,200,000 livres, to a nobleman who offered to get him off for 300,000, "I have already agreed with your lady for 150,000."[3] It is not surprising that the net gain from this expedient was a few paltry millions of francs instead of the three hundred which Noailles had imagined, and that the chamber of justice was, in consequence, summarily suppressed in March 1717.[4] A large deficit for the year 1716 compelled him to borrow and anticipate like his predecessors, in place of lowering the expenditure by fifty millions by economy, as he had planned. His next despairing expedient was equally hopeless, viz., to put an end to extravagance and mismanagement by convoking the States-General. The regent would neither economise nor call the States-General, and poor Noailles could find no more last straws to catch, and gave up his post in disgust. He had shown himself, at least, an enlightened, if not a strong reformer. He would have banished extraordinary expedients and all other expedients, such as inequality of taxation, arbitrary assessments, the prohibition of the export of the coin, which made effective reform impossible.[5] Give him fifteen years of peace and economy to apply his scheme, and he will undertake to restore both credit and prosperity. His abdication in the beginning of 1718 was one more example of the failure of each fresh attempt to master an impossible situation, which had been the order of the day since Colbert's demise. His place was taken by D'Argenson, who also displaced D'Aguesseau as chancellor.[6] With the disappear-

[1] Méms. de Noailles, iii. 133-138; Isambert, xxi. 85-99.

[2] Isambert, xxi. 100.

[3] La Vie Privée de Louis XV., translated by J. A. Justamond, i. 16.

[4] Mémoires, iii. 135; Isambert, xxi. 140-142.

[5] See Mémoires, iii. 177-187.

[6] Journal et Mémoires du Marquis D'Argenson, edited for the Société de l'Histoire de France by E. G. B. Rathery, i. 41.

ance of Noailles and D'Aguesseau the way to influence was opened for John Law as financial master of the regent. John Law, whose system of a paper credit should infallibly galvanise the ruined constitution of the body politic into new life, should now have the chance for which he had been looking these past fifteen years. For four years to come he was the most remarkable man in Europe in his capacity of banker, financier, legislator, merchant statesman, and reformer of original ideas, large schemes, bold enterprise.

Law's history is a curious and romantic one.[1] He was the son of an Edinburgh goldsmith, whose success as a financier had enabled him to purchase the estate of Lauriston in the neighbouring parish of Cramond. As a youth he was noted for his mathematical ability, his love of gambling, and his dissipated habits. He had the misfortune to lose his father when scarcely fourteen years old, and the absence of paternal restraint is partly accountable for the dissolute life to which he gave himself up, first at Edinburgh, and afterwards at London. Idleness and gambling involved him so deeply in debt that he was compelled to dispose of the fee of Lauriston to his mother, in return for the payment of his obligations and the advance of a sum of money. The fashionable libertine had the ill-luck to cross the path of another fashionable libertine, known as Beau Wilson. The result was a duel in Bloomsbury Square, in which Law killed his opponent. He was tried at the Old Bailey in April 1694, condemned to death for murder, and only escaped the penalty of the law by flight to the Continent. He took advantage of his exile to prosecute the study of finance and commerce, especially in Holland, where he acted as secretary to the British resident, and made himself acquainted with the constitution of the Bank of Amsterdam. The opening years of the eighteenth century found him at Edinburgh, writing reports on trade and money, and mingling in the influential society of the Scottish capital of those days. Posterity has unjustly ascribed the credit of some of these pamphlets to his pen instead of that of William Paterson, his contemporary and rival as an economic theorist.[2] That he was a man of some note as a financial specialist is proved by his relations with the Duke of Argyll, the Marquess of Tweeddale, and other leaders of the Scottish Parliament, and by his obtaining the honour of a debate, during the session of 1705, on a proposal to establish a paper currency on the security of land. The proposal was rejected, and Law resolved to

[1] See Life of John Law of Lauriston, by John Philip Wood, and Histoire du Système des Finances (1739), i. 66 *et seq.*

[2] See Bannister's Life and Writings of William Paterson.

seek fortune and fame in foreign lands. It is in his capacity of financial specialist, gambler, and adventurer that we trace his steps during the next few years at all the principal cities of Western and Central Europe. He played hard, won much, and spent lavishly at Paris, Genoa, Turin, Rome, Venice, Florence, Vienna, and other cities. While pursuing gambling as a profession, he never lost sight of higher projects of finance, and kept expounding his theories to princes and ministers. He conferred during his first visit to Paris with the finance minister Chamillart on a plan for reducing the national debt. More important, in reference to his future career, were his relations with the young Duc de Chartres, the future regent, to whom he was introduced.[1] During a second visit to Paris, he attempted to gain the adhesion of Desmaretz to a second plan for extricating that embarrassed minister from his financial difficulties. Louis, it is said, rejected this proposal on the ground of its author's heresy. He may henceforth be detected in the memoirs of the time as a person of considerable note, whose luck as a player enabled him to lend to aristocratic mendicants like the Prince of Vendôme, and whose projects excited the curiosity of statesmen and even of crowned heads, like the King of Sardinia. Victor Amadeus was too cautious to make financial experiments of so radical a nature as those propounded by the fertile and enterprising Scot. He was not powerful enough, he said, to afford to ruin himself,[2] and advised him to seek in France a more fitting sphere for the exercise of his genius. Law took his advice, and is found in 1714 visiting Paris for the third time, in the hope of finding a patron worthy of his theories and confident enough to put them to the test. Such a patron at last appeared in his old acquaintance the Duke of Chartres, now the Regent Orleans. It was not difficult for a man of wit and lax morals like Law to improve his acquaintance with the regent into intimacy. He was admitted to the circle of the duke's *roués*, became Councillor of State and the rival of the Duke of Noailles as financial reformer. In a series of letters and memorials to the regent, accompanied by a translation of his treatise on money and trade, he advocated more radical remedies than the mere improvement of a traditional system. Financial revolution, not mere reform, was what France needed, and Law became the prophet of that revolution.[3]

Money, argued he,[4] is a mere medium of exchange, and does not

[1] See Mém. de Villars, iv. 94. [2] Voltaire, Siècle de Louis XV., 9.

[3] For the beginning of Law's ascendency see St Simon, xlii. 49, 50.

[4] See Money and Trade considered with a Proposal for Supplying the Nation with Money, first published at Edinburgh, MDCCV.

necessarily possess an intrinsic value. Silver becomes money because of its suitableness for use as such. It is durable, easy of delivery, capable of division without loss, etc. It is merely the measure by which goods are valued, and its greater adaptability, as a convenient and serviceable medium of exchange, than any other article suggested its use as money. Any article, however trifling its real value, might serve as money, provided it possessed the qualities necessary as a medium of exchange. It is not the value but the quantity of money that is emphasised. Trade depends on money. Increase the money, and you increase the prosperity of a country. Money is the nurse of trade and commerce. Its abundance creates industry, affords employment, enhances consumption. Its decrease, on the contrary, lessens trade and stunts and impoverishes the people. Scotland, to quote an example, has declined in prosperity and population because its money circulation has diminished. How to increase money is, therefore, the grand question. Some countries have attempted to do so by raising the current value of the coin; others have, on occasion, adopted the expedient of lowering it. Some have had recourse to the prohibition, under severe penalties, of the export of money. The institution of banks has, however, hitherto been the most successful expedient—the Bank of Amsterdam, for instance, founded on a system of credit, which is the best nurse of commerce. The Bank of Amsterdam receives money from the merchants of that city and gives them credit for the amount deposited. The merchant trades with this credit both more expeditiously and profitably than if he used silver in all his transactions. The bank, further, by investing, lending the money received, increases it, and this increase is so much profit to the country by affording greater employment and extending trade. The bank, moreover, affords a ready supply of money at moderate interest, and thus counteracts the exactions of the usurers. The credit of the bank being limited by the amount of money in its coffers, or lent out on good security, is a safe one. The Bank of England and the Bank of Scotland were similarly beneficial to trade, although they issued a much larger number of notes than the real value of their capital, nay, just because of this. This issue of notes on the security of their nominal funds was so much added to the money of the country—that is to say, if the money subscribed to the bank was £10,000 out of a nominal capital of £100,000, and the notes issued represented a sum four or five times that amount, the circulation of money was increased by four or five times. But what if the bank was compelled to suspend payment, as happened in the case of the Bank of Scotland? Were not these notes valueless? True, but

expedients might have been devised to prevent the crisis. The government might, by proclamation, have lowered the value of the coin in the interest of the bank. The chief consideration is not the amount of bullion for which the bank is good, but the credit which it possesses, or is supposed to possess, for credit is the sinew of trade. This credit, be it observed, does not necessarily rest on the real capital of the bank, but on the greater amount of money in circulation in the form of its notes. "If £15,000 is supposed the money in the bank, and £75,000 of notes out, £60,000 is added to the money of the nation. As the money of the nation increases the credit of the bank increases, and the sum of notes out is greater."[1] If the paper credit does not exceed in amount the sum of the coin of the nation it is a safe credit. Money, he repeats, is a thing of pure convention. Land is a better basis of credit than silver, and a paper currency issued on the security of land is as good as a silver currency. Paper has this in its favour that it possesses even in a higher degree than silver all the qualities of money. It is easier of delivery; it has the same value in one place that it has in another; it may be divided without loss; it is capable of a stamp, less liable to counterfeit, and so on. In other words, paper money may displace bullion *ad libitum* in the acquisition of wealth. Let the State, he concludes, become the universal banker; let a committee of the Scottish Parliament issue notes on the security of land, to the extent of one-half or two-thirds of the value of landed property, and the grand end of national prosperity will be attained. The proposal, though influentially supported, failed to secure the adhesion of a majority of the Scottish Parliament, which saw in it an attempt to mortgage landed property to the government, and Law was left, as we have seen, to seek new fields of speculation on the Continent.

In his memorials to the regent,[2] and in a series of letters to the *Mercure de France*, Law amplified his scheme so as to fit it to the particular condition of France. The most salient feature of the scheme, as thus amplified, is the emphasis laid on State intervention. In this respect Law is one of the most remarkable precursors of the Revolution. The State shall become banker, merchant, financier in chief. Its authority and patronage shall co-operate with and control the enterprise of the individual in the attempt to revive industry and commerce. It is not the mere bureaucratic interference of a Colbert; it means the substitution of the State for the individual on new principles, which completely overthrow the administrative theory of

[1] Money and Trade considered, p. 75.

[2] See Histoire du Système, i. 81-87.

mere control without participation. The State shall become the grand capitalist, and shall see that capital is used, not for mere individual interest, but for the general good—the good not merely of the State, but of the people. The poor man shall be ensured labour and sustenance by the regulation of capital, and shall not be left at the mercy of the rich egoist. To this end the State shall create a vast credit by the issue of paper money, in order to quicken industry and commerce, and free the poor from the tyranny of the rich capitalist. It shall, moreover, institute a great commercial company, which shall virtually embrace the whole commerce of the country, and operate with all the strength and resource of a State institution, co-equal with the nation. The State bank shall serve as the feeder of this grand commercial body, and shall in its turn derive strength from its operations. The State creditors shall be reimbursed in shares of the company, whose profits shall contribute not merely to wipe off the debt, but ultimately to render taxation superfluous. In a word, the bank and the company shall relieve the State, and yield a revenue sufficient to maintain it and enrich the nation. The State shall thus become what it ought to be, the universal provider and director, and want and oppression shall be felt no more. Credit, based on a vast issue of paper money by the State, shall revolutionise France.

The scheme is startling and plausible, and proclaims the bold originality of the man. Let us pause a moment to ask whether it is realisable, whether the credit, on which the vast structure is to rest, is substantial, and likely to be productive of these millennial blessings.

Law's prime error consists in emphasising the quantity of money apart from its value. It is by no means a matter of indifference whether paper be substituted for bullion as money. Gold and silver represent a value as precious metals; a piece of paper has of itself no value at all. A louis d'or has the value of a louis d'or; a bank note for that amount has only a representative value. If it cannot be exchanged for the sum for which it ought to be good in gold or silver, it is worthless. Nor is it strictly true to say that the issue of notes increases the money of a country. It may serve to increase production, and indirectly add to wealth. If it takes the place of the metallic currency, while that currency is profitably employed to serve some other purpose, it increases wealth by the amount of this profit. But it adds nothing to the bullion of the country, and therefore represents no real increase of money. That the mere issue of paper notes would increase money and extend industry was a false assumption. Industry only thrives on capital, whether public or private.

and a mere paper currency constitutes not capital, but its representative. Suppose the government adopts the system of paper credit, turns banker, and issues a vast quantity of notes, not in virtue of the capital which it ought to possess as a bank, but in proportion to the amount of coin in circulation in the kingdom. Far from doubling the amount of money in the country, as Law insisted, it does not add a farthing to it. In so far as it issues notes that are not representative of the capital possessed by it, its notes have no real value. The coin in circulation belongs to the public, not to the government, and notes issued by it on the strength of a security that does not belong to it, but to the people, are fictitious. The risk and imprudence of such an enterprise are self-evident. Yet this was what Law proposed to do in order, as he erroneously believed, to increase money, attract the coin of the nation to the bank, in exchange for notes, use this fund for the far-reaching purposes of the bank, and develop industry on a vast scale on the strength of a fictitious credit. Had Law been free to direct the operations of the scheme, unembarrassed by circumstances, his ability and enterprise might have piloted it past the rocks to which it was inherently exposed. He had the opposition of the Parliament to encounter, and the machinations of secret enemies at home and abroad to reckon with. More serious still, he had in the regent a patron whose extravagance tended to jeopardise the scheme by a too lavish emission of paper money. The support of the State, as represented by Philip of Orleans, had to be paid for! The alliance was a costly one. An extravagant regent was not the most serviceable patron of a concern whose success was in itself problematic from the first.

The Council of Finance, with the assistance of a number of experts, examined the scheme, and came to the conclusion that, though eminently fitted to benefit the nation, its application was not expedient in the circumstances. Permission was, however, granted to establish a private bank on the 2nd May 1716.[1] The shares were 1,200 in number, of 5,000 livres each, or £250, and £300,000 in all. Notwithstanding his unlimited faith in a paper currency, Law, as head of a private bank, followed the safe course of keeping the issue of notes within the amount of the bank's capital. They were good, too, for their value in coin on the day of issue, without regard to the subsequent variation in that value. This fact conferred on them an enormous superiority over the coinage, which, owing to the miserable financial condition of the kingdom and the arbitrary devices resorted to by the government to reduce the debt and main-

[1] Isambert, xxi. 100-103, 106-113.

tain expenditure, was constantly fluctuating and depreciating in value. The bank's notes were accordingly preferred to coin. The principle of the bank being sound and its credit good, its success was assured, and on the strength of this credit, industry made rapid strides. The regent, convinced by success, directed the collectors to remit the taxes in its notes.[1] He even presided at a meeting of its shareholders in December 1717. He used his authority to protect the bank from the opposition of the Parliament and the hostility of the farmers-general and other champions of the financial corruption of the old system, whose leader was D'Argenson, the chancellor and president of the Council of Finance. An edict ordering a renewal of the coinage in May 1718 afforded the Parliament a pretext for an attack on Law, who had already demonstrated the impolicy of such arbitrary tampering with the currency.[2] The opposition of the Parliament to such tactics was justifiable, but it was D'Argenson, who is said to have proposed the manœuvre for the purpose of giving the Parliament its opportunity against their common enemy, that merited the odium of the measure. There were political motives at work, too, on the part of the clique of the Duke of Maine, in this attempt to discredit Law and at the same time overthrow the government of the regent. Rumours of a new Fronde were abroad. The publication of the memoirs of Cardinal de Retz and other heroes of that stirring movement roused the spirit of parliamentary opposition and political self-assertion. Is there to be a renewal of the struggle of 1648? is the question that agitates Paris? Will the Parliament defy Orleans, as it formerly defied Mazarin? Its spirit and its action were at all events fitted to breed anxiety in the mind of the regent. On the 20th June 1718 it suspended the execution of the edict. The Council of State replied by decreeing its action null and void. Thereafter the Parliament assumed a more aggressive attitude. On the 12th August it prohibited the revenue officers from receiving the notes of the bank in payment of the taxes, and the participation of foreigners, even if naturalised, in the fiscal affairs of the kingdom.[3] The report circulated that it intended to hang Law forthwith, as a criminal against the State. Law in consternation sought refuge at the Palais Royal. The regent hesitated before this resolute spirit of revolt. St Simon, the Duke de la Force, and Fagon, Councillor of State, urged energetic measures, and, fortunately for Law, the regent, acting on their representations, summoned the refractory Parliament

[1] Isambert, xxi. 106 (September 1717). [2] See Money and Trade, chap. iv.
[3] Isambert, xxi. 106, 107.

to a *lit de justice*, commanded it to abstain from interfering in affairs of finance, and restrict its remonstrance to the edict presented for its consideration, and arrested several of its members.[1] The opposition collapsed at once, and submitted to be ignored as humbly as if Louis XIV. still occupied the place of his nephew. The only practical outcome of the imbroglio was the suppression of the councils of administration and the re-establishment of responsible ministers in their place. With their suppression the administrative reforms advocated by Fénélon received their quietus.

The regent not only maintained Law against an opposition which was hostile to his own power, he declared the bank a royal bank in December 1718, and thus placed it under the control of the government.[2] Law was doubtful as to the expediency of this policy of dependence on an arbitrary government, and unsuccessfully advocated the appointment of a commission to supervise the bank's operations. The only limit to which the institution was subjected was the promise not to issue paper money without the consent of the Council of State, but even this restriction was to prove in the sequel illusory. A baneful change was made in the terms of the note. Instead of being an obligation to pay the bearer the sum represented by it at the value of the day of issue, it became merely a general promise to pay in silver coin. Its value was thus subject to the fluctuation in the value of the coin. Law, who perceived the danger to credit in this departure from a fixed value, remonstrated in vain, but for a time the bank's credit suffered no eclipse. Variation in the value of the coin was no new expedient in France, and France had unlimited faith in Law. Another questionable device was the declaration that all sums above six hundred francs should be paid, not in silver, but in gold or notes. As the quantity of gold in the country was small, this regulation in reality made the paper money inconvertible, and was practically equivalent to a forced circulation of the notes. The paper money, which, as originally issued, was equivalent to its value in coin, thus came to represent no adequate security, and instead of circulating, as at first, in virtue of its superiority to the coin, circulated by reason of an artificial contrivance. The issue of notes, too, soon outran prudent dimensions, and was far in excess not merely of the assets of the bank, but of the whole coin of the nation.

[1] See Isambert, xxi. 159-162; Mém. de St Simon, xv. 337 *et seq.*, and xvi. 1-51; Duclos, Mém. Secrets, 201, 202; Voltaire, Hist. du Parlement, Œuvres, xiii. 340-347; Mém. de D'Argenson, i. 39-42; Journal de Barbier (edited for the Société de l'Histoire de France by Villegille), i. 6-10, 15, 16.

[2] Isambert, xxi. 167-169.

To his functions as a banker Law added those of a company projector. He obtained the monopoly of the commerce of Louisiana, as the vast region along the course of the Mississippi was called. The colonisation of this enormous region had been attempted without success, first by La Salle and D'Iberville, and subsequently by Crozat.[1] The formation of a company to renew these efforts was now committed to Law, who saw the vast capabilities of this enormous region under energetic management. In August 1717 a company, called the Company of the West, was established by royal sanction, with a nominal capital of one hundred million livres in 200,000 shares of five hundred livres each.[2] The shares were to be paid in *billets d'état*, or paper money in the hands of the State creditors. These *billets* were in reality worth less than two-thirds of their nominal value, but the company offered to receive them at their full value. Its shares were accordingly eagerly bought up. The company thus became the creditors of the State, and its real capital was only the interest of one hundred millions of livres at four per cent., that is, four millions. It obtained in return ample privileges, such as the monopoly of trade with Louisiana, the perpetual possession of the greater part of the soil, the trade in skins with Canada, and the exemption of the colonists from taxation for twenty-five years. Ships were purchased to carry out emigrants and stores, and the shareholders already saw themselves reaping a golden harvest from the virgin soil and the trackless forests of the New World. The prospect of a vast development of commerce, and consequently an enormous accumulation of wealth, seemed by no means visionary. There was some ground for Law's conviction that the Mississippi Company would equal, or even surpass, in the vastness of its operations, the English East India Company. But in order to reap the harvest, it was necessary to sow, and to sow patiently. To expect immediately a vast return from the emigration of a handful of colonists and the fitting out of a few ships was fanciful. A quarter of a century of patient enterprise would not have been too long a period for the project of Law and his associates to ripen into golden returns. A visionary tendency to dazzle the imagination of shareholders, and a feverish haste to get wealth are evident from the outset. Like all Law's schemes, this one was hampered by the connection with a government, head and ears in debt, seeking and practising desperate expedients to steer clear of bankruptcy, and using the brains of Law for the immediate purposes of an embarrassed administration. Law was only too pliable in the hands of his royal patron, and while

[1] Hist. du Système, i. 88-104. [2] Isambert, xxi. 106.

protesting occasionally against unsound financial measures, launched into problematic schemes with all the confidence of the gambling theorist. The operations of the bank and the privileges of the company were alike rapidly extended. He acquired successively for his company the rights of the Companies of Senegal, Africa, the Indies, China, which had long been in a state of decay.[1] The Mississippi Company, thus swelled, so as to embrace the whole foreign trade of the kingdom, then took the name of the Company of the Indies, and issued a large number of new shares.[2] Its privileges were guaranteed for a period of fifty years. Not only did the company absorb all other companies. The mint was handed over to it for a payment of fifty-two millions.[3] Shortly after it acquired the lease of the farms-general[4] on condition of paying a higher rent to the State, and thus concentrated in its hands the collection and management of the taxes. It undertook to lend fifteen hundred millions for the payment of the State debt at three per cent. instead of four, and thus relieve the king to the extent of one-fourth of the interest.[5] In order to raise this sum, Law adopted the expedient of creating new shares.[6] Should these shares be subscribed, the company would buy up the whole national debt. Its privileges and its extensive operations, the fabled reports of El Dorados on the Mississippi, the acquisition of large territories by the original shareholders, the prospect of boundless wealth, as the result of participation in the grand enterprise, fascinated the imagination and opened the purses of crowds of eager subscribers. The feverish competition raised the prices of the shares to fabulous amounts. A share originally worth five hundred livres rose to ten thousand, and even, according to some statements, twenty thousand. The mania of speculation seized all classes, and the highest in the land might be seen jostling the humblest in the Rue Quincampoix, where the stock jobbing was carried on, in the frantic attempt to buy. From far and near, even from beyond the frontiers of France, men and women flocked to the enchanted spot to catch the tide of fortune. Seats on the coaches that plied between the capital and the provincial towns sold at a premium. The concourse of fortune seekers may be judged from the

[1] Isambert, xxi. 107 (May 1719).

[2] See Isambert, xxi. 107, and Hist. du Système, i. 137, 162, edicts of May and July 1719, creating each 25,000 new shares.

[3] 25th July 1719.

[4] Hist. du Système, i. 176-180; Isambert, xxi. 109 (August 1719, not July 1720, as Isambert erroneously says).

[5] Isambert, xxi. 107 (October 1719).

[6] *Ibid.*, and see Hist. du Système, ii. 28.

fact that the population of Paris, according to one estimate, swelled to one and a quarter millions, of whom three hundred thousand were strangers, during the height of the speculative frenzy. House rent rose to twenty times its former amount, and the owner of even a single room in the neighbourhood of this historic street speedily became a man of fortune. A lucky cobbler made two hundred livres a day by furnishing his humble booth with a few chairs for the fashionable ladies who came to gamble. Still more profitable was the idea that occurred to a hunchback of letting his hump to the jobbers as a writing desk. This undesirable appendage is said to have earned him fifty thousand livres in a few days. The madness of speculation led to robbery, and even murder, in order to secure the means of indulging in it. Count Horn, a Flemish nobleman of high connections, was broken on the wheel for stabbing to death a wealthy stockbroker in a tavern in the Rue de Venise. Law persisted in demanding the execution of the sentence, and the necessity of making an example prevailed over the intercessions of the most influential friends of the accused.[1] After this the street was closed, and the Place Vendôme became the shrine of the crowds of mammon worshippers, who pitched tents, for want of more suitable accommodation, in the centre of the square and gambled and jostled all day long. The chancellor complained that the din and the disorder made it impossible to transact the business of the Court of Chancery, which held its sittings in the square, and operations were accordingly removed to the gardens of the Hôtel de Soissons, which Law bought for this purpose.

One of the features of the furious gamble was the phenomenal fortunes made at a single venture by a variety of speculators, from princes and dukes to cooks and waiters. Magnificent palaces, enhanced domains, excessive luxury attested, among other signs, the enormous gains of aristocratic speculators like the Duke of Bourbon, the Prince of Conti, the Duke of Guiche, and other grandees. Not less fabulous were the sums amassed by obscure individuals, who competed with smaller means, but with equal assiduity and cleverness, for a share of the profits of speculation. A milliner, for example, who had won a lawsuit and played with the proceeds in the grand lottery, became, it is said, worth a sum of Law's paper money equal to five millions sterling. Numerous and amusing instances are recorded of similar good luck falling to the lot of coachmen, footmen, artisans, clerks. The streets of Paris were overcrowded with the splendid equipages of these and other opulent *parvenus*, who aped the manners of their late masters with a prodigious show of

[1] Journal de Barbier, i. 23-26.

jewellery, silk, and velvet. Fashionable ladies were astonished to behold their servants appearing in all the magnificence of the latest finery, and resplendent with diamonds, on the promenade of the Place Vendôme, or at the opera. Law indeed succeeded in turning many of the domestic fraternity into grand lords and ladies for the time being, as well as augmenting the extravagance of people of fashion. The secret of some of these vulgar fortunes is singular. The messenger sent by a master or mistress to dispose of their shares at a certain figure, found the price of each raised by several thousands of livres, and pocketed the difference. By this means, such and such a menial adventurer, who only possessed a few sous in the morning, might find himself a fine gentleman with 500,000 livres in his pocket in the evening. No wonder that, with such examples of rapidly acquired affluence to excite to emulation, the speculative mania seized the lower classes, and led to the widespread neglect of manual labour for the pursuit of fortune in the Rue Quincampoix or the Place Vendôme. Even men of culture and character were caught by the contagion, and an amusing story is told of the Abbé Terasson and M. de la Mothe descrying each other in the crowd of buyers and sellers in spite of the moralising criticisms of human folly in which they had previously indulged at the expense of the mammon worshippers. The philosophers smiled at this incontestable proof of the weakness of human nature, and proceeded to bargain with all the animation of their neighbours. Rare, indeed, was the virtue that could withstand the spirit of the time.

Apart from the questionable effect of unhinging both morality and society, the speculative mania undoubtedly gave a passing impulse to industry and commerce. The shopkeepers of Paris reaped a rich harvest from the unparalleled concourse of fortune seekers and the extravagance and luxury which accrued from success. The dissipation and magnificence of inflated speculators made the winter of 1719, from a social and monetary point of view, the most brilliant on record. The circulation of paper money, backed by an unlimited faith in the genius of Law, raised prices and wages and developed industry. Credit begat confidence, and this confidence, though delusive, acted on commerce and manufactures with all the intensity of artificial growth. No one cared to inquire for the time being whether this artificial propagation might not be blighted by a sudden and adverse change of temperature. On every hand the fact of prosperity was patent, and this fact was taken as the measure of that of the future. On this point the testimony of a contemporary observer, who was also the apologist of the system, is conclusive. To Dutot the history of the

three years from 1716 to 1719 is the history of a revolution. "Plenty immediately displayed herself in all the towns and throughout the whole country. She relieved our citizens and labourers from the oppression of debts, which indigence had obliged them to contract, she revived industry, restored that value to every fund which had been suspended by those debts, enabled the king to liberate himself from his chains and make over to his subjects fifty-two millions of taxes, and more than thirty-five millions of other burdens. This plenty lowered the rate of interest, crushed the usurer, raised the value of land to eighty and one hundred years' purchase, reared stately edifices both in town and country, repaired the old which were falling into ruin, improved the soil, gave enhanced value to every fruit produced by the earth. Plenty recalled those citizens whom misery had forced to seek a livelihood abroad. In a word, riches flowed in from every quarter."[1]

What wonder that the nation saw in Law the universal benefactor, the Messias whose mission it was to bring redemption from the miseries of the *régime* of Louis XIV. His audience chamber was besieged by a mob of eager suitors for the honour of an interview. Among them were princes, dukes, marshals, prelates, everybody of consequence, as well as of little or no consequence. So great was the sycophant crowd that it was necessary to bribe porters, lackeys, and valets, to get a word with the great man. "Long live the king and Monseigneur Law," was the cry that constantly resounded in the streets. To be a member of a party which he honoured with his presence was a greater object of desire than to dine at the Palais Royal; to be seen by him, far less to speak to him, was in itself a distinction. Society is always the victim of some sort of fetish worship, and for a season John Law could have vied with the great Louis himself as a society hero. What would the grand potentate have felt could he have imagined that the parasitic race which haunted the halls of Versailles would, in five years' time, be grovelling in abject servility at the feet of an obscure alien from Edinburgh, who was not even noble by birth, in order to obtain a look of recognition, good for a few million livres. Human nature of the parasitic sort, he would have concluded, is as despicable as human history is at times altogether inaccountable. Law's shares are his sceptre, and this sceptre is as potent as that of the grandest of the Bourbons. He would keep his auditors waiting for hours while he played a game of piquet with the Earl of Islay, or wrote a letter to his gardener at Lauriston

[1] Quoted by Stewart, Principles of Political Economy, iii. 26, 27, from Dutot's Réflexions Politiques sur les Finances et le Commerce, ii. 200.

about the planting of cabbages, and the dukes and lords of the motley crowd in the ante-chamber valued the honour of the interview all the more. The briefest possible interchange of phrases sent them away in the highest elation, though the great man might eye them with excusable contempt, and speak in very measured terms. John Law, dazzling meteor though he be, preserves his Scottish shrewdness, and sees through the hollowness of these ducal flatteries. He is, however, unfailingly courteous to the ladies. This the ladies know, and strange stories are recounted of the persistence of his lady visitors, who contravened the rules of decency in their anxiety to talk finance in his private apartment. Appointed controller-general of France, kings and foreign governments hastened to pay tribute to his power. The British Government, while intriguing against him in secret, recalled its ambassador, Lord Stair, with whom he had quarrelled, for fear of giving offence too openly, and substituted Sir Robert Sutton in his place.[1] The man who left his native land a penniless adventurer, and was outlawed from England for murder, was now in a position to dictate the appointment of a new British ambassador, and received the freedom of his native city in a golden casket, as a mark of the admiration of his countrymen. His power and popularity were immensely increased by his conversion to Catholicism,[2] which that model of morality and religious principle, the Abbé Tencin, whom the Parliament convicted of simony, undertook to operate for £10,000, and by his almsgiving and contributions to ecclesiastical building schemes. The poets of Paris exhausted their muse for epithets in celebration of the incomparable Law, as they were soon to do for expletives to defame, ridicule, and execrate him.[3]

What is the secret of all this deference? Bank notes. It was by enormous issues of paper money that such speculation was possible. The amount of coin in circulation was far too limited to attempt such vast operations by its aid alone. The issue of notes by the bank kept pace with the issue of shares by the company, until the paper money in circulation reached, before the final crash in May 1720, the enormous sum of over 2,600 millions, or just about double the amount of coin in the kingdom, which was reckoned at 1,300 millions. These repeated issues of notes were of ominous import. Where is the security, even supposing the bank the owner of all

[1] Mahon's History of England, ii. 8, 9. Stair's letters on Law are in the Hardwicke Papers.

[2] Méms. de St Simon, xvi. 352, 353, and Duclos, 248, 249.

[3] For these flatteries see Hist. du Système, ii. 7, 8, and 28-31.

the coin in the kingdom, which it is not, that this mass of paper is worth its nominal value in bullion? Law's system of credit was not the sound one of another contemporary Scotsman, who played a great *rôle* in English and Scottish financial circles at the close of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth centuries. William Paterson founded the Bank of England on the principle that paper could only be safely issued, if kept well within the amount of the capital of the bank. In the institution of his bank, Law followed this prudent example. The notes of the original bank were an obligation to pay in coin the amount for which they were valid on the day of issue. They did not exceed in number the paying power of the bank in cash, but now that the bank had become a royal institution and issued vast quantities of paper, not on the security of its real capital, but on the fiats of an arbitrary government, where was the security that its notes were worth as many sous as livres? Was the company, of which the regent was the largest shareholder, a sufficient guarantee? The company was indeed a vast concern, which had absorbed the whole foreign commerce of France, and owned the mint as well as farmed the taxes. Its revenue was estimated at between eighty and a hundred millions of livres from all sources. A very respectable revenue, doubtless, and capable of vast increase in the future. But supposing the assets of the company to have been far larger than they were, what if the holders of its shares should desire to realise them in cash? Would the bank be able to bear the strain, or Law, even with all the resources of the company, to answer for the result? Already, towards the end of 1719, there were signs that the more prudent of its shareholders were eager to ensure their enormous gains in coin and plate, and were exporting their gold and silver for safety to Holland and England. If this precaution should become general, both the company and the bank would have to reckon with the fact that the enormous issue of paper money, without adequate security for its redemption, would recoil with disastrous consequences on their own heads. Law was not indifferent to the fact, and during the winter of 1719-20, when the mania had passed its climax, and reflection was beginning to assert itself, he began to take measures, ineffective measures, against the evil day. To maintain confidence, he reverted to various devices which smack more of the expedients of arbitrary power than the spontaneous enactments of a sound credit. The demand for the notes of the bank was stimulated at the expense of the coin. While the value of the coin was reduced, that of the notes was made invariable, and their emission increased. Measure followed measure with the view of discrediting the circu-

lation of the coin, and forcing that of the notes. Traders and others were forbidden to make payments in silver for amounts above ten francs, and in gold for sums above 300 francs.[1] The bank, it was further decreed, should only receive cash within the limits of these amounts, and this, too, at a discount of five per cent. In the end of January the forced circulation of the bank notes, hitherto confined to the cities in which the bank had opened branches, was decreed for the whole kingdom, and the coin was ordered to be recast, with a diminution of its value. The company's agents were authorised to make domiciliary visits for the purpose of seizing the coin which had not been brought to the mint.[2] This was to maintain credit by tyranny with a vengeance, and exceeds in violence even the expedients of the *régime* of Louis XIV. Law, wrote Stair sarcastically, must indeed be a sincere convert to Romanism, for he has proved his faith in transubstantiation by turning paper into coin.[3] People made haste to save themselves from the invasion of paper by buying up jewels, land, house property, plate, anything that had a real commercial value. To close this channel of escape, the wearing of jewels and the use of plate were prohibited. Towards the end of February, Law persuaded the regent to confer the administration of the bank on the company in the hope of strengthening the former by the reputation of the latter. The company was in truth no mere swindling sham. It was actively exploiting the colonies. It had founded New Orleans and several trading stations in Canada, Newfoundland, Mauritius, Bourbon. Its activity in navigation and shipbuilding recalled the palmiest days of Colbert. It owned over a hundred vessels, and the value of its property exceeded 300 millions. Finding the supply of French emigrants limited, Law paid several German princes for batches of settlers, and shipped off the vagabonds, beggars, and criminals of Paris to Louisiana.[4] Had he had time to develop this vast enterprise, disaster might have been avoided, or at least staved off. But the most successful enterprise was insufficient to keep up the company's shares, now that the desperate expedients to force the circulation of paper money were beginning to excite panic. Law struggled grimly with the growing mistrust, and redoubled the expedients to give a fictitious worth to the notes, and make them, if possible, the only medium of circulation, to abolish the coin in fact. Hence the decree of the 9th February, prohibiting any individual, except the royal treasurers, merchants, and manufacturers, from retaining in their

[1] Isambert, xxi. 108 (December 1719).
[2] *Ibid.*, xxi. 108 (February 1720).
[3] Duclos, 272.
[4] Isambert, xxi. 108.

possession more than 500 francs in money, or in the form of articles of gold and silver.[1] Hence the prohibition to make payments in bullion for sums above 100 francs, and the declaration of a premium on paper over coin. The aggression against coin in favour of paper reached its climax on the 11th March 1720, when all payments in coin were forbidden.

In spite of all the expedients of a forced circulation, the shares began and continued to fall throughout the winter and spring of 1720. More ominous still, the ascendency of Law over the regent was beginning to wane. The controller-general, who was practically master of France at the end of 1719, was now to experience the revulsion of feeling to which every adventurer, who cannot perpetuate success, is exposed. The man who had ousted Noailles and D'Argenson from power, overshadowed Dubois, braved and cowed the Parliament, displaced the whole fraternity of farmers-general and other parasites of the revenue, and excited the apprehensions of the British Government, could not afford to be unsuccessful. The friendship of the regent was not proof against powerful malcontents. D'Argenson and even Dubois were only too ready to lend themselves as instruments of the British Government, as well as of their own jealousy. In an outburst of temper at the beginning of March, Orleans went the length of almost threatening to send Law to the Bastille. The fit passed and amicable relations were restored, but the fate of Law and his schemes depended on his personal ascendency, and that ascendency was already shaken. If the public lost faith and the regent gave ear to his enemies, ruin was inevitable. Law might point to the extraordinary revival of trade, and the diminution and good management of taxation. The evidence was incontestable. But what if all this prosperity rested on an artificial basis, on a paper credit that was to a large extent worthless? Law attempted to retain his hold on the public confidence by publishing a number of anonymous letters in the *Mercure*.[2] A forced circulation was justified, he maintained, by the selfishness of those who appropriated the coin and hindered the benefits of its circulation among the mass of the citizens. He proposed to the regent a plan for extinguishing as many of the notes as possible. Unfortunately the majority of the council had become either secretly or openly hostile, and, under the leadership of D'Argenson, supported a proposition which dealt a fatal blow at the system of credit, and spread consternation from one end of France to the other. The edict of the 21st May[3] directed a gradual

[1] Isambert, xxi. 108.
[2] See Hist. du Système, iii.
[3] Hist. du Système, iii. 149-156.

reduction of the value of the notes to one half, and a similar reduction of the value of the company's shares. From the 1st December, bank notes of the value of 10,000 livres, for example, were to pass at 5,000, and shares for the same amount were to fall to the same proportion. The illusion of two years was thus swept away by a stroke of the pen. Confidence and credit were prostrated in a moment, and though the irresolute regent, at the request of the Parliament, partially revoked the degree of the 21st May a week later, all hope of restoring equilibrium was gone. Law and his system were doomed beyond recovery. Bankruptcy of bank, company, and government, with untold misery to all classes, to which the Parisian mob did not fail to give violent expression, was the result of the speculative madness, the sanguine recklessness, the distortion of economic principles which had seen in Law a second Messias, and El Dorados in Utopias.

It is due to his much maligned memory to add that he was not the charlatan and swindler whom the fickle Parisians execrated and ridiculed by turns, after the collapse of the bank and the company. His reputation has suffered from failure, and from the adverse judgment of caricaturists and historians. "The incomparable Law" became in popular song "the eldest son of Satan." His life was demanded by the enraged mob that surrounded the bank in the desperate effort to obtain a modicum of coin for a bundle of notes. He and his wife were several times in danger of being torn in pieces on the street. The regent took the precaution of ordering two companies of Swiss Guards to protect his house and accompany his carriage. Though prevented by these precautions from taking his life, the populace experienced the satisfaction of smashing his empty carriage and maltreating his coachman, who had the imprudence to reply in strong language to its opprobrious outcries. He continued to share in the regent's goodwill for some time longer, and in August was even nominated director-general both of the bank and the company. The hostility of the Parliament, which showed itself in the refusal to register an edict confirming the privileges of the company, was punished by its exile to Pontoise.[1] The hatred of the populace was not, however, to be mollified by the show of royal patronage or by the herculean efforts of Law to mitigate the effects of failure and restore confidence. It burst forth again and again, and on one occasion when Law coolly showed himself at the opera, a storm of opprobrious cries compelled him to seek safety in retreat. On another occasion a M. de Broussel, who had the misfortune to

[1] Isambert, xxi. 185, 186 (21st July 1720).

be mistaken for the fallen demigod, while driving in the Rue St Antoine, only saved himself by taking refuge in the sacristy of the Jesuit church. His position became so unbearable that he solicited and ultimately obtained permission to leave France. He took his departure, according to his confession to the regent, with a sense of his faults, but with no consciousness of having acted in bad faith. "I acknowledge that I have committed great faults. I did so because I am but a man, and all men are liable to err, but I declare to your royal highness that none of them proceeded from knavery, and that nothing of that kind will be found in the whole course of my conduct." He no doubt felt, if he did not add, that no small share of the blame of his failure was imputable to the regent himself. The dissipation and extravagance of the duke and his *roués* were certainly answerable to some extent for edicts which were a manifest contravention of morality and policy. One fact tends to confirm the sincerity of this confession. He left France a poor man, and even declined the offer of a large sum from the regent and the Duke of Bourbon. The assertion that several waggons laden with bullion had preceded him to Brussels, and that enormous sums had been lodged by him in the banks of England, Amsterdam, and Venice were merely the fabrications of calumny.

If Law's financial and economic theories induced disaster, and brought universal and indiscriminating execration on their author, the legislative measures promoted by him during the four years of his ascendency from 1716 to 1720, entitle him to honourable mention. He sought not merely to make France prosperous, but to advance the popular welfare. The great financial scheme was only part of a far-reaching programme of reform for the purpose of easing the people from excessive taxation, shielding them from the exactions of corrupt farmers-general and speculators, abolishing the restrictions on internal commerce, ameliorating the administration of justice, reducing interest and suppressing usury. Abuses that tended to harass the people found in him an active enemy. His system was something more than the system of the stock-jobber. It was the system of a man of bold ideas in finance, taxation, commerce, whose successful application and permanent operation might have precluded the Revolution of 1789. Had Law succeeded in establishing a sound system of credit, in extinguishing the national debt, in permanently displacing the corrupt *régime* of the farmers-general and the speculators, in equalising and lightening taxation, in reforming the administration of justice, in abolishing the restrictions on trade and developing the foreign commerce of France, he would have done much to minimise

the abuses of the old *régime*, and render it compatible with the welfare of the people, and thus have removed some of the most fruitful germs of the revolutionary spirit. The monarchy would still have been an absolute monarchy, for Law's activity was confined to questions of finance, commerce, administration, and did not extend to constitutional or social reform. But the linking of "the system" with absolute monarchy was an earnest attempt to neutralise the evil effects of Bourbon despotism. To have solved the problem of how to clear off an enormous debt, and place the country in a position to bear scathelessly the terrible strain of future wars, would have been to forestall one of the most crucial questions of 1789. Questions of constitutional reform would doubtless have come into prominence in due course, but if the State had been unencumbered by an accumulating legacy of debt, and been in a position to refrain from grinding taxation, the people would probably not have settled them by revolutionary methods. The greater the misfortune, therefore, that Law, as much by the fault of others as by his own, failed to realise the great projects which he inaugurated too hurriedly and recklessly. As it was, the evanescence of his ascendency prevented his legislative measures from striking root. The corrupt and oppressive *régime* of the farmers-general returned, the company retained many of its privileges only to monopolise the foreign trade of France in the interest of its shareholders, instead of that of the nation, the government found itself still more deeply immersed in debt, and only partially extricated itself by new oppressions and a new breach of public faith. Of all the grand projects and high hopes of these three years of speculative delirium, the only permanent benefit to the future was the impulse given to commercial and industrial enterprise, and the creation or improvement of a magnificent system of roads to serve the revival of trade and industry. The system tended to make money-making popular, if I may use the phrase. All classes were caught by the mania for wealth, and the mania remained, in spite of the sharp lesson of the ruin of so many visionary fortunes, to exercise far-reaching effects on French society. "All classes of the State," remarks a contemporary, who moralises on the effects of the system, "have to-day but one object—to be rich."[1] Wealth became more and more identical with power, and as wealth was acquired more generally by the middle class than by the other classes, the corporate influence of this class received an impulse from that communicated to the commercial and industrial spirit by Law. Its affluence, coupled with a quickened intelligence, was to make its influence an

[1] Duclos, 291.

increasingly powerful factor in the political life of the nation. From this point of view the system may be said to have been a preparation for the Revolution. That revolution was to come partly because the middle class had become too wealthy, intelligent, and influential to be denied a controlling voice in legislation and government.

SOURCES OF THIS CHAPTER.—Isambert, Recueil, xxi.; Mémoires de St Simon; Mémoires Secrets de Duclos; Mémoires du Duc de Noailles (Petitot et Monmerqué); Mémoires du Marechal de Villars (Société de l'Histoire de France); Vie Privée de Louis XV., translated by J. A. Justamond; Life of John Law, by J. P. Wood; Histoire du Système des Finances (1739); Bannister's Life and Writings of William Paterson; Michelet, Histoire de France, xvii.; Bailly, Histoire Financière; Journal et Mémoires du Marquis D'Argenson, edited for Société de l'Histoire de France by E. J. B. Rathery; Voltaire, Siècle de Louis XV.; John Law, Money and Trade Considered; Journal de Barbier, edited for the Société de l'Histoire de France by Villegille; Voltaire, Histoire du Parlement; Dutot, Réflexions Politiques sur les Finances et le Commerce; Mahon, History of England; Stair's Letters in Hardwicke Papers.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### The Regent and Dubois—Foreign Policy and Internal Administration (1715-1723).

THE foreign policy of the regent was for a time as reactionary as his internal administration. It would be more correct to speak of the foreign policy of the Abbé, subsequently the Cardinal, Dubois, for as John Law was the duke's mentor in financial and administrative reforms, Guillaume Dubois was his guide in foreign affairs. Like Law, Dubois has had the unmerited misfortune to live in history as the blackest of characters. He, too, paid the penalty of a rapid rise to fortune and power in the shape of unmitigated calumny. Men like the Duke of St Simon, who had aristocracy on the brain, and D'Argenson, who was jealous of pushing ability, were mortified by the success of the son of a country apothecary, whose talent and address were his only title to fortune. They revenged themselves by retailing all the virulent defamation which envy and malice could invent or exaggerate at the minister's expense. Dubois is, accordingly, represented in the memoirs of the time as an intriguing adventurer, a monster of vice, a consummate egoist, devoid of principle or patriotism. The origin of his influence over the regent is found in the art with which he used his opportunities, as his preceptor, to initiate him into a life of debauchery. Abbés in those days, and even bishops, archbishops, and cardinals, were not necessarily godly men, but Dubois is credited with the distinction of being the most cynically and shamelessly immoral of all the ecclesiastical dignitaries of his time, worse even than the papal nuncio Bentivoglio, or the gallant Rohan,[1] both of them cardinals and fashionable libertines into the bargain. Dubois had neither faith nor morality sufficient to make a decent hypocrite. Not even the resources of hypocrisy could hide the scandal of his public and private orgies. He was a notorious cynic and sceptic, nay, he was crimp to the Duke of Orleans. Nevertheless he was determined to become archbishop and cardinal, and he made use of

[1] See Mémoires de St Simon, x. 31.

his influence over the regent to attain these ends. The record of his ministry is merely the record of his personal ambition, which he serves by every means fair and foul, and in so doing sacrifices the honour and interest of his country. This is the Abbé, subsequently Cardinal, Dubois, minister for foreign affairs, and ultimately prime minister of France, as St Simon[1] and other memoir writers and historians have depicted him. Happily the portrait is not a truthful one. St Simon dipped his brush too deeply in personal animus to be a reliable limner. His enemies are *ipso facto* all scoundrels, and his judgment of the clever abbé is consequently most unjust. That Dubois debauched his pupil's mind is one of these biassed aspersions. He would never have been appointed to so responsible a position, or countenanced in it by Louis XIV., if his morals had been of the degraded type implied by this assumption. He would never have earned the grateful recognition of his services, in this capacity, on the part of the duke's own mother, who anxiously watched over her son's education. Her letters testify, on the contrary, to the earnest efforts of the preceptor to instil the love of virtue into the mind of the pupil. Even after she became bitterly hostile to the minister and joined in the chorus of calumny against him, she never included this odious accusation among his crimes. It is certain that Dubois would never have enjoyed the friendship of Fénélon, or the confidence of Louis XIV., had there been any ground for doing so. He did not even associate himself with the circle of the duke's rakish familiars before or after his rise to the far higher offices of foreign minister (1718-1723) and prime minister (August 1722-August 1723). The fact is that, instead of being a devotee of low sensual excess, he had no particular predilection for a vicious life. He was not a model abbé by any means. The ecclesiastical profession was to him, as to many other abbés of his time, a mere means of temporal advantage and a source of income, not a spiritual office. It did not hinder him from being a man of the world of easy morals, but he was not in this respect worse than many of his fellow ecclesiastics, and a good deal better than some of them. Another crime in the eyes of St Simon and other detractors was his ambition. The ambition of the young abbé to acquire political preferment was, however, only in keeping with the traditions of French churchmen, even if, unlike him, they had taken orders, and risen to the episcopal bench and the cardinalate. There was a long line of political churchmen, of whom Mazarin, Retz, Richelieu, Amboise were distinguished examples, to excite

[1] See the terrible portrait which he draws of him in tom. xi. 175-178.

the emulation of the clever and enterprising abbé. That his ambition was fanned by the craving for power and place, rather than from purely patriotic motives, might not be laudable; it was not essentially criminal. His merit as a politician would depend on how he used that power. His detractors tell us that he used it execrably, that he sacrificed France to himself. He was, they assert, the author of the Anglo-French alliance;[1] he was bribed by English gold and rewarded with a pension of £40,000[2] for his subservience to England; nay, he was scheming to put Louis XV. out of the way by poison, as he had done the Duke of Burgundy, in order to ensure the throne to the regent, and at the same time the permanence of his own power. These and similar assertions against his political probity belong to the same category with the exaggerated aspersions of his private life. They are pure calumny, springing from malignant hate of a successful rival of humble origin. Dubois was not a man of lofty character or ideas; he was not a statesman of the first rank; he was nothing more than a clever politician. He was self-seeking and lacking in refinement, but his talents, his instincts, and his career were not those of a mere political hireling. There is nothing in official documents, even the secret ones stored in the archives of London and Paris, to confirm the sweeping charges of treachery to France for personal ends, of which the contemporary memoirs are full, and which historians have repeated without taking the trouble to confront them with the testimony of these documents. The fact is that Dubois was not the author of the Anglo-French alliance, which excited the passionate and indiscriminating denunciation of his enemies as an unpatriotic, selfish, and treacherous departure from the traditions of Louis XIV. He was, at most, but the instrument of its final adjustment. The idea originated with George I., who first perceived the value to both himself and the Duke of Orleans of an alliance between France and England, and who, for this reason, cultivated, through Lord Stair, friendly relations with the prospective regent. It was thus a question of practical politics even before the death of Louis, and before Dubois had any appreciable influence on French foreign policy. The advantage of such an alliance was evident, and the advantage was certainly not all on the side of the British king. That the idea sprang into birth in the fertile brain of

[1] See, for instance, Mémoires de Villars (Soc. de l'Hist. de France), iv. 93; cf. 103: "L'Abbé Dubois uniquement occupé de plaire au régent se mit en tête de renverser les principes que le feu roi avoit établis." Villars opposed the policy of the British alliance.

[2] St Simon, xv. 315.

an enterprising abbé in search for expedients for his personal advancement, is preposterous. It arose out of the perception of the far larger international interests to be served by it. At the commencement of his reign George's tenure of the British throne seemed anything but secure. He had become King of Great Britain by a miracle of good luck. He was menaced by a large and active Jacobite party at home, by a rival abroad who could count on influential support both in England and France. Louis XIV. had, indeed, bound himself by the Treaty of Utrecht to dismiss the Pretender to Lorraine, and to refrain from assisting him in his designs on the throne of his father. But Louis might observe the Treaty of Utrecht only as long as it suited him, as he had done in the case of important treaties before. To secure the observance of the treaty, it was eminently advisable to secure the alliance of France, and preclude the possibility of French connivance with, or active co-operation in Jacobite plots at home and abroad. Hence the secret overtures of George to the Duke of Orleans in view of the imminent demise of Louis XIV., whom it was, of course, futile to attempt to convert to such a scheme. Cogent arguments were not wanting to recommend the prospective alliance to the duke. It was of material importance to him to assure the support of George to his claim to the regency against the pretensions of Philip V. of Spain. Moreover, in the event of the death of Louis XV.—by no means an improbable contingency, considering the frailty of his health (the imminence of that of Louis XIV. being evident),—the French crown would devolve on the regent. His claim would, however, be disputed by Philip, who regretted the renunciation of his rights at Utrecht, and was resolved to maintain them, if not for himself, at least for one of his sons. His ambition was fanned by his second wife, Elizabeth of Parma, who was busy scheming for heritages in Italy, possibly even in France, for her children. Philip and Elizabeth found an able instrument of their ambition in Alberoni, who exhausted the resources of a subtle statesmanship in order to realise their projects. The Italian abbé, like Dubois, of humble origin, was personally much of a piece with him in his capacity of enterprising politician. He had made his *début* during the late war as envoy of the Duke of Parma to the Duke of Vendôme, who commanded the French forces in Spain. Vendôme was charmed by the coarseness of his wit and the license of his manners, and took him into his service. He remained with the duke in his capacity of hanger-on until the marriage of Elizabeth of Parma to Philip opened to him a historic career as prime minister of Spain. His ability, if not his character, undoubtedly merited the

honour. His audacity in intrigue, his activity in organising the naval and military forces of Spain, his efforts to revive industry and fill an exhausted treasury, threatened to make the rivalry of Philip a serious menace to the prospects of Orleans to the French throne. To strengthen the claims of Philip, he strove to tempt the alliance of Great Britain and Holland by the offer of favourable commercial treaties with Spain, in support of the policy of aggression against the Italian possessions of the emperor and the claim of Orleans to the French succession.

The position of George I. and Orleans was thus analogous, and community of interest suggested community of action. The British monarch's right to the throne was contested by a rival who could count on the allegiance of a powerful party, and might throw into the scale against him the might of France. Similarly the prospects of Orleans were exposed to the hostility of Philip V., as well as of powerful enemies at the French court. Parity of interest demanded identity of policy. The support of King George was of the first importance to Orleans as against the pretensions of Philip; that of Orleans was no less advantageous to King George as against the schemes of the Pretender. The duke, accordingly, received the overtures of Stair with the utmost cordiality, but after his accession to the regency he hesitated to close with them, in deference to the opposition to which such a reversal of policy would expose his incipient administration. The attempt of the Jacobites to overthrow the Hanoverian succession intensified the importunities of Stair and Stanhope. Orleans still hesitated to brave the sympathy of his Council of Foreign Affairs and of France for the Pretender, and even laid himself open to the charge of abetting the foolhardy expedition of James III. to Scotland. After the failure of the Jacobite rising of 1715, George could afford to relax his overtures for the alliance, and indulge in the coolness and even the hostile resentment[1] which the halting attitude of the regent had inspired. To Orleans, on the other hand, the hostile intrigues of Philip rendered it increasingly desirable, but he now found that he had missed his opportunity, and could only obtain it at an enhanced price. It was not sufficient that the Pretender should migrate from Lorraine to Avignon; the regent must drive him beyond the Alps, must stop and demolish the fortifications of Mardyke, which Louis XIV. had begun to construct in lieu of those of Dunkirk, as contrary to the spirit of the Treaty of Utrecht and a menace to the security of England, and must refuse

[1] See Coxe's Walpole, i. 153, 154, where the idea of a revival of the Triple Alliance against France is a serious contingency.

an asylum to the Jacobite refugees in France. These stipulations intensified the friction between the two governments. In complying with them the regent would have been running counter to the sympathies of the French people, and would have wounded French national sympathies as well. The negotiations reached a deadlock, and it looked as if the regent would have to reckon with a renewal of the Triple Alliance against France instead of securing the support of George I. against his personal enemies. It was in this emergency that the Abbé Dubois proved the efficacy of his diplomatic address in saving the situation for his patron. The apprehensions of George I. at the trend of events in Germany certainly contributed to pave the way to an understanding. Both as German prince and British king, George feared the consequences of the success of Tzar Peter against Charles XII. Russian influence was gaining in Germany in proportion to the advance of Russian arms. What if Tzar Peter and Regent Orleans should arrive at an understanding as an alternative to the Anglo-French alliance? Would not such a contingency endanger his position in Germany as Elector of Hanover and prove the precursor of renewed Jacobite activity, under the auspices of France, against his British throne? While events in Germany were thus tending to play into his hand, Dubois hurried to the Hague in July 1716, on the ostensible errand of buying rare books and pictures, to interview Lord Stanhope on the way with his Britannic Majesty to Hanover. The *soi-disant* book collector was successful in his secret interviews in breaking the ice and preparing the basis of an agreement. In the following month he followed George and his minister to Hanover to renew and complete the negotiation. As the result of his industry and his address, a preliminary agreement was signed in October, and this agreement was transformed in November into a formal treaty, which, by the adhesion of Holland in the following January (4th January 1717), developed into a new Triple Alliance.[1] The treaty stipulated the expulsion of the Pretender beyond the Alps, and of all rebels against the respective governments, the demolition of the military works at Dunkirk and Mardyke, and the partial guarantee of the Treaty of Utrecht, especially the articles regulating the succession to the thrones of Great Britain and France.

The reversal of the policy of Louis XIV., which transformed the inveterate enemies of the late king into the allies of the regent, was a notable feat. Though the merit or demerit of the idea did not belong to Dubois, its realisation owed a good deal to his diplomatic skill. To the adherents of Louis' policy the transaction was odious

[1] Dumont, Corps Diplomatique, viii. 484-488.

as a betrayal of France. In their view, and in that of subsequent historians, Dubois sold France for a pension and the red hat. The accusation is, as we have seen, a pure calumny. The charge that the change of policy was an ignominious betrayal of French interests is equally devoid of foundation. The expulsion of the Pretender might not seem a magnanimous act, but it was one which Great Britain, in view of the rebellion of 1715, indirectly, if not directly encouraged by France, might reasonably demand from a friendly government on the legitimate pretext of self-defence, and one which France could not refuse without running the risk of strained relations with a powerful neighbour. Avignon was not French territory, but it was surrounded by French territory, and as the asylum of a hostile prince, was practically a part of France. Moreover, Louis himself had undertaken by the Treaty of Utrecht to banish the son of James II. to Lorraine, and to forbid him Avignon was only acting on the same lines. The demolition of the fortifications of Dunkirk and Mardyke was similarly but carrying out both the letter and the spirit of the Utrecht treaty, and while it might be disagreeable to fulfil an obnoxious stipulation, it was not dishonourable. France had received Lille as compensation for Dunkirk, and had no cause to complain if it was prevented from stealing a march on its enemy by replacing Dunkirk by Mardyke. Even the additional stipulation that English and Dutch commissioners should supervise the operation was only in keeping with a similar one in a former treaty, to which Louis had himself agreed.[1] But what of the indignity put upon the King of France by calling him merely the most Christian monarch in the duplicate version of the treaty retained by the British Government, and adding to the title of George I. that of Rex Franciæ? In this respect the treaty was no more derogatory to the dignity of the French crown than were those of Utrecht and Ryswick, in which the same nomenclature occurs.[2] Then there was the outcry about the sacrifice of French interests to those of the regent and Dubois. On the contrary, it was palpably in the interest of France, as well as of the regent, to avoid a repetition of the terrible wars of Louis XIV., from which it was beginning in some measure to recover. The Triple Alliance was a guarantee of immunity from such devastating conflicts in the near future, at least, for it united France in general foreign policy with its former foes, as well as safeguarded it against the menacing hostility of Spain by enabling it to check that hostility

[1] Treaty of Turin with Victor Amadeus in 1696.

[2] In the Treaty of Utrecht, for instance, Anne is denominated *Regina Franciæ* (Dumont, viii. 343).

promptly and successfully. It is, therefore, not easy to see wherein the rascality of Dubois lay, and the irate historians and autobiographers do seem to be seeing phantoms in belabouring the luckless abbé with the abuse of their fevered imaginations. But did he not abase himself to the extent of recognising his obligations to George I. and Lord Stanhope for the favours which the success of his diplomacy earned him at the regent's hands? What is to be thought of a French minister, indignantly demand the patriotic historians, who could write the servile letters that Dubois wrote to foreign kings and statesmen? "If I only followed the impulses of my gratitude," wrote he to Mr Craggs in September 1718, "I should take the liberty to write to his Britannic Majesty to thank him for the place with which the regent has gratified me."[1] "I owe to you the place which I occupy," he added in a letter to Stanhope, "which I ardently desire to make use of in accordance with your wishes, that is, for the service of his Britannic Majesty, whose interests will always be sacred to me." This language has certainly a fawning accent in it, but the irate historians forget that it was addressed to confirmed friends and allies, and that it should not be too literally taken. It is, perhaps, too candid from the representative of one great State to those of another, but the goodwill of George and Stanhope had made the work of negotiation successful, and Dubois was but admitting a fact, in too exuberant terms, when he recognised that this success had made his career. If he had been in the pay of the British King, as his detractors assert, this language would not have been capable of so satisfactory an explanation. Happily for his credit, the British pension is a myth.[2]

The sagacity of Dubois in negotiating the Triple Alliance was justified by the immediate sequel. A few months after the conclusion of that alliance, the aggressive policy of Alberoni received a startling *dénouement* in the Spanish expedition against Sardinia (August 1717). The island, which had been transferred to the emperor by the Treaty of Utrecht, was won back to Spain almost without a blow. The arrest of the Spanish Grand Inquisitor, while passing through Lombardy on his return to Spain from Rome, served as a pretext for this

[1] Correspondance Inédite du Card. Dubois, i. 244, 247.

[2] For the diplomatic history and Dubois' share in it, see Wiesener, Le Régent, l'Abbé Dubois, et les Anglais, d'après les sources Britanniques, a very valuable work which brings for the first time the testimony of the Record Office to bear on the diplomatic problems of the time. See also the Correspondance Inédite du Card. Dubois, the Mémoires Secrets de Dubois, edited by Sévelinges, and Seilhac's L'Abbé Dubois. The best work in English on the regency is Perkins' France under the Regency

sudden act of hostility. It meant, of course, the renewal of war between Philip V. and the Emperor Charles VI., and it threatened to revive the great conflict which the Treaties of Utrecht and Rastatt seemed to have extinguished. Had Louis XIV.'s policy of a Franco-Spanish alliance been the policy of the regent, as St Simon urged,[1] France must once more have been drawn into an exhausting struggle with its old foes, Britain, Holland, and the Empire. Instead of choosing this alternative, the regent, backed by George I., was now in a position to offer his mediation between the belligerents. The terms offered were most equitable. Philip should waive his claims to the former Spanish territories ceded to the emperor; the emperor should unreservedly recognise Philip's title to the Spanish throne, and both should be indemnified for the sacrifice of conflicting claims—Philip by the guarantee of the reversion of the Duchies of Tuscany and Parma to Don Carlos, his eldest son by his second wife; the emperor by the exchange of Sicily for Sardinia by Victor Amadeus. To this arrangement Philip would not consent, even with the offer of the cession of Gibraltar by Great Britain to enhance the inducement. Alberoni would have all that Spain had lost by the Treaty of Utrecht, or nothing, and hoped to win the support of France to his flighty schemes by fomenting conspiracy against the regent. The Duchess of Maine, and the Spanish ambassador, Cellamare, intrigued with the malcontent nobility to this end,[2] while the regent and Dubois paid back the compliment by fanning, through the French ambassador, St Aignan, the disaffection of restive Spanish grandees, who were to declare Philip incapable of ruling and seize the government in the name of his eldest son.[3] A much more effective measure in bringing matters to a decisive issue was the Quadruple Alliance,[4] for which the Triple Alliance had paved the way, to compel Alberoni, who followed up the conquest of Sardinia by that of Sicily (August 1718) to desist from his aggressive schemes. King George took the initiative, and in the same month in which the Quadruple Alliance and the seizure of Sicily were consummated, the British fleet, under Admiral Byng, attacked and inflicted a crushing defeat on the Spaniards off Cape Passaro. Even this decisive blow failed to bring Alberoni to his senses. He preferred to risk the hostility of the alliance rather than give up the dream of regaining the excised territories of the old

[1] Mémoires, xii. 459-462.

[2] Mémoires de Villars, iv. 117-123; St Simon, xvi. 149 *et seq.*

[3] Mémoires de Noailles, iii. 143-176.

[4] Dumont, Corps Diplomatique, viii. 531-541 (August 1718); Journal de Barbier, i. 22.

Spanish empire. By the spring of 1719 Spain was standing at bay before the four great Powers of Europe. The result was, of course, a foregone conclusion. Alberoni's infatuated attempts to fan insurrection in Brittany, and create a diversion in favour of Spain by a small expedition on behalf of the Pretender to the north of Scotland, with which Charles XII. of Sweden was expected to co-operate, were merely the expedients of the political gambler. Discomfiture dogged all his plans, and disaster overwhelmed him in Spain itself. The Scottish expedition ended in fiasco; the Austrians reconquered Sicily for Savoy; a French army under the Duke of Berwick invaded the north of Spain (March 1719); British and French fleets bombarded the coast towns, and did considerable damage to Spanish shipping. This accumulation of misfortune reached its climax in the banishment of the rash and ill-balanced minister, and was followed by the Treaty of London (17th February 1720), which ratified the terms previously proposed, minus the offer of Gibraltar, and plus the stipulation of a conference to meet at Cambrai to adjust other debatable questions. This congress, when it did at last convene in 1724, distinguished itself only by the barrenness and prolixity of its discussions.[1]

Great Britain and France took no payment for their efforts to preserve the equilibrium of Europe on the basis of the Treaty of Utrecht. The fact has been reproached against Dubois, who has been accused of serving the maritime supremacy of Britain without any adequate compensation. Yet, though France gained nothing in return for the large expenditure of sending an army across the Pyrenees, the Anglo-French alliance had frustrated the ambitious schemes of Philip and Alberoni, and thus secured what was the greatest advantage in the circumstances—the boon of peace.

Under Dubois' auspices the promise of far-reaching reforms with which the regent began his administration was not fulfilled. Law's scheme had proved to be a vision. Dubois was not too friendly to these large aspirations, and in his jealousy of Law and his eagerness to oblige the British Government, helped to thwart their realisation.[2] He was not more friendly to the legislative control of the Parliament, and had no sympathy with the demand for the States-General. The abbé, it must be remembered, though guiltless of the enormities which calumny laid to his charge, was no great statesman. He was a clever negotiator, with a clear insight into the complexities of international politics, and an exceptional skill in working for a desired

[1] See Mahon, History of England, ii. 77-79.

[2] See Correspondance Inédite de Dubois, ii. 2.

end. He was not the man to guide to great results the reforming sympathies of his patron, and he neglected the opportunity which his ascendency would have furnished to a greater man. His internal administration is, in fact, petty and barren, and there is only too much truth in the charge that, in his capacity as director of the regent's internal policy, he followed too much the cue of personal ends. His conduct was largely governed by the desire to obtain the red hat, and it is not edifying. It was, in fact, scandalous, though the scandal was not known outside the circle of select intriguers to whom the business was confided. It would have been better for Dubois' historic reputation could he have been content to labour for the welfare of the State, and leave the coveted distinction of the red hat alone. He was too small a man and not a great enough statesman to do so. In his hunt for the hat he took advantage of the death of the Archbishop of Cambrai to secure the qualification of higher ecclesiastical rank than that of abbé. There was nothing incongruous, in view of traditional usage, in the fact of Dubois, as a minister of State, desiring ecclesiastical distinction. He was only following, in this respect, the footsteps of the many distinguished French statesmen whom the French Church had nurtured. His morals were indeed not above reproach, and his faith was not profound. Though he was not the abandoned charlatan that his enemies represent, he was not better than many other abbés who were both lax and sceptical. But an easy morality, or a lack of orthodox faith was no essential obstacle to ecclesiastical preferment in the eighteenth century, and Dubois, as archbishop and cardinal, would not have been an exceptionally shocking instance of scandal. This distinction was at any rate an early object of his ambition, for he had, even as preceptor, the audacity to solicit the red hat from Louis XIV. The regent was, however, if we may credit the autobiographers, rather shocked by the demand for the office lately held by Fénélon. He knew only too well, they tell us, that Dubois had neither religion nor theology to make a decent hypocrite, and hesitated to expose himself to the ridicule of a nomination which was the joke of a dissipated court and the disgust of all decent Christians. "My lord," quoth the unconscionable abbé, in broaching the subject to the regent, after the death of Cardinal Tremouille, Archbishop of Cambrai, "I dreamt last night that I was Archbishop of Cambrai." "You have very funny dreams," answered the regent with a smile. "But why not make me archbishop as well as any other?" "You Archbishop of Cambrai! now you are dreaming with a vengeance." To make the thing more plausible the abbé ran over all the indifferent dignitaries to whom the regent

and Le Tellier before him had given the mitre. The contrast was still too shocking apparently. "But who is to consecrate you?" interrupted the regent. "Oh, if that is all, the thing is as good as done. I have got that all arranged." "But who the devil is he? Name him." "Your chief almoner, the Lord Bishop of Nantes. He is waiting in your antechamber; I will introduce him; he will be charmed with your choice, for you promise me the archbishopric." Without waiting for a reply, and with a profusion of thanks, Dubois fetched M. de Tressan, who entered, and eulogised the merits of the candidate. Whereupon Dubois, leaving the regent confounded, bowed himself out to announce his appointment to the world, and thus forestall the rivalry of other candidates. A letter from George I. in support of his candidature was the more probable incentive to the regent's choice. Dubois, who obtained the lower ecclesiastical orders from M. de Tressan[1] at a single mass, tried hard to get some distinguished prelate to give him the last touch. Cardinal Noailles refused to act, but Cardinal Rohan was less scrupulous. His eminence had in truth much less reason to be exacting on moral grounds. Massillon, who assisted at the ceremony, which was performed in June 1720 in the presence of the regent, the ambassadors, and a vast concourse of distinguished persons, had not the excuse of lax virtue, and his compliance would tend to show that Dubois was by no means the scandalous candidate that the autobiographers depict.[2]

The possession of the pallium only intensified the craving for the red hat. Dubois redoubled his efforts to win the prize. He had managed to interest George I. in his suit, and Dubois' hat figures in the diplomatic correspondence of the time between Paris and London.[3] The regent, who was one of the most facile of benefactors, and had rather a contemptuous indifference as to the value of these hollow dignities[4] which a foolish world prizes so highly, accordingly recommended him strongly to the Pope. He became one of the official French candidates. The Pope, however, had to be courted with other arguments, and the result of this competition was apparent in the ever-increasing infidelity to the policy of tolerant liberalism which had marked the accession of Orleans. The hunt after the red hat put an end to the reaction from Ultramontanism. If we may

[1] St Simon, xvii. 21 *et seq.* [2] See Duclos, 264-269.

[3] Stanhope is found writing to Stair on the subject in June 1719, and George to the regent in November of the same year. George refers to him as "a person so worthy of recognition."

[4] See Mémoires de D'Argenson, i. 22.

credit Duclos, the regent had been on the point of annulling the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes.[1] The Babylonish captivity should at last come to an end, hoped the faithful remnant of the persecuted Huguenots. France should regain the most industrious and skilful of her citizens in rendering tardy justice for the wrongs they had suffered. The tolerant spirit of the regent was, however, the fruit of a sceptical indifference, and was not equal to the effort of braving the opposition of ecclesiastical rancour and prejudice. The agitation of the Protestants of Guienne was harshly repressed by the Parliament of Bordeaux, though the regent deserves the credit of having opposed the plan of Marshal Berwick to massacre their assemblies, and of having pardoned a number of the delinquents whom the Parliament had sentenced to the galleys. The persecuting edicts of the preceding reign remained in force, with the exception of some slight modifications, in spite of the demand of the Duke of Noailles for toleration in the interest of an enlightened patriotism. Jansenists and Gallicans had evidently not profited from their experiences in the Bastille and Vincennes to learn a much-needed lesson in toleration. Nor did it fare much better with the Jansenists and Gallicans themselves, who, if hostile to the Protestants, were opposed to the Jesuits. The regent had more sympathy with them than with the Ultramontanes, and it looked for a time as if Cardinal Noailles and the opponents of the Bull Unigenitus would triumph over their persecutors. The Sorbonne boldly appealed to a future Council against the authority of a partial Pope. The Parliament actively espoused the same cause, and the great mass of the lower clergy was in sympathy with Parliament and Sorbonne. The ecclesiastical warfare over the Bull, which Louis and Le Tellier had regarded as the touchstone of orthodoxy, fomented dissension in every diocese of the kingdom. The regent and his council commanded the angry disputants in vain to abstain from controversy, and to let the question of the Bull lie in abeyance in the interest of the public tranquillity.[2] Jansenist and Jesuit were too angry with each other to listen, and Pope Clement XI. aggravated the situation by refusing to invest the nominees of the regent to vacant sees, in order to force the government to accept the Bull. In response, the regent empowered a commission to deliberate on an expedient for installing the bishops without reference to the Pope. Clement was abashed by this bold act into retreat, and despatched a special courier to Paris with the bulls of investiture. The panting

1 "Il fut sur le point d'annuler l'édit et de rapeller les Protestants" (Mémoires Secrets, 154).

2 Isambert, xxi. 156 (October 1717)

courier travelled night and day, and expired from the fatigue of his exertions on reaching the capital. The Pope, however, avenged himself for his compliance by condemning the appellants to a future Council as schismatics and heretics, and threatening to excommunicate the opponents of Unigenitus. The Parliament rejoined by condemning the papal decree, and the government again vainly enjoined silence (3rd June 1719).

It was at this stage of the controversy that Dubois' passion for the red hat made its decisive influence felt in favour of intolerant Ultramontanism. If the Jesuits would secure the hat, Dubois would answer for the Bull. On this understanding, he persuaded the regent to declare the Bull, which Cardinal Noailles agreed to accept with certain modifications, obligatory on the clergy, and to forbid all appeals to a future Council[1] (4th August 1720). The opposition thereupon collapsed. The Parliament earned its recall, in the following December, from Pontoise, whither it had been exiled for its opposition to Law, by agreeing to register the edict.[2] There was a long way between promise and performance, however, for Clement knew the political value of procrastination in such matters. Dubois was compelled to employ for another year all the resources of intrigue, bribery, seduction in order to obtain the coveted prize. His hat became the grand question of Christendom, and a strange light this petty intrigue throws on the singular methods by which the kingdom of God on earth was ruled from Rome in these, as in other days. George I., the emperor, the King of Spain, even the Pretender, whose support Dubois bribed unknown to his royal patron at London, besides a host of prelates and ministers, entered the lists on his behalf. Their efforts were seconded by cardinals like Albani, and by the Pope's relatives, whom he bought with lavish presents and whose zeal he kept warm by ample promises of more. Clement listened, took his share of the louis d'ors, promised, procrastinated, and at last despatched the written offer of the first vacancy, which cunningly proposed to be made at the request of the Pretender, and of which Dubois could of course make no use at the Court of St James. Ultimately death carried off the embarrassed Pope in time to preserve his memory from the scandal of completing a sorry transaction, by no means exceptional in the annals of the Curia. The hesitation of his successor, Innocent XIII., who owed his election to Dubois' intrigues, was at last overcome by further remittances, and Dubois became cardinal on the 16th July 1721.

[1] Isambert, xxi. 187, 188.

[2] *Ibid.*, xxi. 189, 190; Journal de Barbier, i. 42-66.

In the following year (August 1722) the regent revived for him a title, befitting his ecclesiastical rank, which had been in abeyance since the death of Mazarin. Cardinal Dubois became prime minister of France.

The ecclesiastical policy of Cardinal Dubois during the last two years of the regency did not belie the ardent professions of subservience to the interests of Rome, which had helped to win the red hat. The Jesuit Linières succeeded the Abbé Fleury as royal confessor.[1] The posthumous edition of the abbé's "Discourse on the Liberties of the Gallican Church" was suppressed,[2] and a strict censorship of the press revived the rigour of the *régime* of Le Tellier against the free expression of Jansenist and Gallican tenets.[3] Dubois, as cardinal, and practically head of the Gallican Church, developed all the bigotry of a Le Tellier, without the excuse of the fanaticism of the Jesuit confessor of Louis XIV. He certainly performed his part with great adroitness. The spectacle of this singular creature aping, as president of the assembly of the clergy in June 1723, the mien and the language of a great ecclesiastical luminary, is a most amusing piece of histrionic art. Loyola himself could not have been more in earnest. The authority of the Pope and the emancipation of the Church from State control are the grand features of the ecclesiastical policy of our quondam free-thinker, whom the Duke of Noailles dubbed the Abbé Friponneau.[4] If God spared him, Innocent XIII. should become a second Hildebrand. Luckily the stroke of death intervened between him and "the great things which he was about to undertake for the authority of the Holy See and the episcopal jurisdiction."[5]

An indirect fruit of Dubois' Ultramontane zeal was the reversal of the foreign policy of the first five years of the regency, in favour of a Franco-Spanish Alliance. The bigoted Philip, and his bigoted Jesuit confessor, Daubenton, entered readily into negotiations with a minister who was now courting the Jesuits, and was prepared to gratify the ambition of Philip and his spouse with the hand of Louis XV. for one of their daughters, and the assurance of his good offices in the negotiations for the recovery of Gibraltar. The objections of the British cabinet were obviated by the confirmation

[1] Mémoires de St Simon, xviii. 433, 443. Abbé Fleury, confessor of Louis XV., was not the same person as Bishop, subsequently Cardinal, Fleury, his preceptor.

[2] Barbier, i. 183, 184, who ascribed the work to Bossuet.

[3] See Isambert, xxi. 216 *et seq.*; cf. 256.

[4] Voltaire, Histoire du Parlement, Œuvres, xiii. 348.

[5] See Mémoires Secrets de Dubois, ii. 365.

of the Assiento Treaty.[1] The reconciliation of the courts of Paris and Madrid was then fitly crowned by the affiance of Louis XV. to the Infanta, who was received with showy demonstrations of goodwill in the French capital. It was further confirmed by the marriage of a daughter of the regent to the heir-apparent of the Spanish crown.

Six months before Dubois' death the regency had come to an end. In October 1722 the coronation of Louis XV. was celebrated with all the traditional pomp at Reims.[2] In the following February he attained his majority and became ruling as well as titular king.[3] These formalities did not affect Dubois' position as prime minister. A lad of thirteen, and that lad the shy and lazy Louis XV., was totally unfit to wield the sceptre, and remained for several years longer but nominal king. Dubois retained his power till his death in the following October. He died from the effects of over-exertion rather than of vicious excess, as his calumniators affirmed. Orleans had just sufficient vitality to take his place for less than three months, when a shock of apoplexy put a premature end (he was only forty-nine) to a life of reckless dissipation and vacillating effort.

The regency was a failure to a large extent as an essay in reform, but it at least broke new ground. It was an interval of peace, and as such gave France a chance of recuperating. In this fact lies the chief merit of Dubois' statesmanship. Its financial and economic experiments led to disaster, yet they exercised a quickening effect on society, and thus bequeathed their influence to the future. Orleans, Dubois, Law were no devotees of tradition, and tradition had received at their hands a rude shock from which it never recovered. Though Dubois, as cardinal, essayed to nip in the bud the intellectual and ecclesiastical reaction which the regent had at first favoured, he was too small a personality to thwart effectively the spirit of intellectual freedom. There was no force of character in the abbé's assumed fanaticism, and of this quality the pliant regent had even less. Criticism of edicts, institutions, traditions had found an entrance, and criticism had come to stay, despite the cardinal's spasmodic zeal for the Pope and the Jesuits. A new life had been inspired into the exhausted body politic, and it was becoming more and more evident that the French monarchy could not risk a relapse into ruinous wars, and still more ruinous extravagance with impunity. The middle class, in particular, had attained the consciousness of its importance, and was acquiring the means to assert it.

In one respect the regency did infinite harm to France. It

[1] Dumont, Corps Diplomatique, viii. pt. ii., 33-36 (13th June 1721).
[2] Isambert, xxi. 210, 211. [3] *Ibid.*, xxi. 213.

quickened, if it did not originate, the process of moral declension, which was to reach so scandalous a climax in the reign of Louis XV. To outrage morality was no new phenomenon at the French court. Louis XIV., Henry IV., Francis I., the most splendid of French monarchs, had played the rake with the most persistent audacity, but they had not descended to vulgar debauchery, or if they had, as in the case of Francis I. in his youthful days, they had preserved the dignity of their office by the grandeur of their personality or their professions. The moral laxity of Philip of Orleans had not even this redeeming feature. He took pleasure in vulgar debauchery, and he was at no pains to conceal the fact, nay, he defied the sentiment of public decency in the middle class in the most flagrant manner. He divorced the immorality of the court—no new feature in French social life—from the decency even of hypocrisy, which veiled the social corruptions of the pious period of Louis XIV.'s life. Open the tomes of St Simon, who was honourably distinguished by the purity of his private life, or Barbier, or Duclos, or D'Argenson, in order to realise to what an appalling degree the laws of morality were sapped by such an example. The example of the regent contributed to lower, not only public as well as private morality, but the royal authority itself. The vileness of the Palais Royal was a melancholy change from the latter-day decorum of Versailles. After the regent only a monarch of exemplary life could redeem the monarchy from the ridicule and contempt of which his excesses were bound to make it the object in every mind of masculine virtue. Unhappily, Louis XV. was not the man to rehabilitate it in this respect. The bestiality of the Palais Royal was the introduction to the bestiality of the Parc aux Cerfs. The wonder would have been that Louis XV. could have grown into a virtuous man in such an atmosphere as that of his youth.

SOURCES OF THIS CHAPTER.—Isambert, Recueil Général, xxi.; Dumont, Corps Diplomatique, viii.; Wiesener, Le Régent, l'Abbé Dubois, et les Anglais, d'après les Sources Britanniques; Correspondance Inédite du Cardinal Dubois; Mémoires Secrets de Dubois, edited by Sévelinges; L'Abbé Dubois, by M. Seilhac; Mémoires de St Simon; Mémoires de Villars; Coxe's Walpole, vol. i.; Mémoires de Noailles; Journal de Barbier, edited for the Société de l'Histoire de France by M. Villegille; Duclos, Mémoires Secrets; Mémoires de D'Argenson; Mahon, History of England, vol. ii.; Perkins, France under the Regency; Voltaire, Histoire du Parlement.

## CHAPTER XIX.

LOUIS XV. AND CARDINAL FLEURY, WITH AN APPENDIX TO 1748 —REVIVAL OF THE STRUGGLE WITH THE PARLIAMENT, AND FAILURE OF THE POLICY OF PEACE AND ECONOMY (1723 1748).

THE Duke of Bourbon, Prince of Condé, whom Louis, by the advice of his preceptor, Bishop Fleury, appointed prime minister in succession to Orleans, was totally unfit for high political office. He had neither character nor ability to recommend him. His history had been that of a fashionable libertine, whose rank entitled him to take a part in the councils of the regency, and who had a sharp eye to his own interest. He had speculated largely in Law's shares; had profited by his friendship to amass a large fortune, not merely in paper, but in gold; had spent it lavishly in dissipation and in the decoration of Chantilly, and was otherwise known to fame as the infatuated lover of Madame de Prie. St Simon pronounced him hopelessly dull, almost stupid in fact, and as obstinate and intractable as dull people are sometimes inclined to be, while he had not even the virtue of that sort of bovine uprightness, occasionally associated with a dull mind, to atone for his want of ability. No wonder that St Simon was thunderstruck when Fleury communicated to him his intention to recommend him as the best substitute going for Orleans' vacant place, and predicted a *régime* of rapacity and corruption. The wily bishop saw in M. le Duc, as he was called, simply a stop-gap for himself.[1] His influence over his old pupil was so complete, and the duke's incapacity so great, that he could count on the actual, if indirect, manipulation of affairs until Bourbon had made himself impossible even as nominal chief of the government. The government of M. le Duc, as far as he governed at all, proved in fact to be the government of Madame de Prie.[2] Madame was the daughter of the financier Pleneuf, who had made a large fortune at the expense of the State and the people.

[1] St Simon, xv. 316, xix. 161-164. [2] *Ibid.*, xv. 317, xvi. 317.

Her father's wealth and her own beauty had won her the hand of the Marquis de Prie, who was sent by Louis XIV. as ambassador to Turin. Pleneuf was obliged to take to flight to Italy to escape the inquisition of Noailles' chamber of justice,[1] and Madame was thrown on the resources of her charms for an income. With so compliant a husband as the noble marquis, this was no difficult task to one whose seductive beauty was heightened by an assumed *naïveté*, which concealed a violent temper and an ambitious, enterprising mind.[2] She captivated the Duke of Bourbon, and took the place of the Marquise de Nesle as his mistress. This ascendency she maintained over the prime minister. The regent, though a scandalous profligate, had not allowed the women to govern him, or interfere in affairs of State. Even when befuddled with wine he remained remarkably discreet on this point. The Countess of Sabran, who attempted to improve the occasion to extract a political secret, was led before a mirror. "Look at yourself," said the tipsy regent, "and see whether one can think of talking politics before so pretty a face."[3] M. le Duc, on the other hand, was a mere cypher in the hands of Madame de Prie, whom Duclos calls "the absolute mistress of the kingdom for two and a half years," and Duclos is amply confirmed by St Simon. She found an adroit second in Paris Duverney, who had made a fortune in speculation, and had been employed by the regent to liquidate the State debt. By his aid she imposed a great display of political ability and knowledge of affairs on her credulous and abject paramour. Her cupidity and her caprice were law, and mischief enough did she manage to do before the cautious Fleury took courage to assert himself, and send minister and mistress into retirement.

From some of the earlier edicts promulgated under the duke's auspices we discern a sort of spasmodic anxiety to operate a forcible improvement in the situation. For want of higher prey he laid hands on the thieves and beggars, with whom the country swarmed, as the result of the misery begotten of past wars and present misgovernment. The penalties for robbery were increased in severity.[4] Able-bodied beggars who would not work were compelled to earn their living in State hospitals, in which provision was also made for the infirm poor.[5] Every person able to work was enjoined either to find employment or betake himself to the hospital within fifteen days, and work under State supervision in return for subsistence. Five years on the galleys was the penalty for refusal to comply with

[1] St Simon, x. 104, xii. 290. [2] Duclos, 350, 351. [3] *Ibid.*, 217; cf. 366.
[4] Isambert, xxi. 260, 261. [5] Isambert, xxi. 271-273.

this drastic regulation against laziness and vagabondage. There certainly was something to be said for this policy of compulsion, as a protective measure against the nuisance of the professional pauper, but it might, of course, become a terrible engine of abuse and oppression against the unfortunate poor, to whom misfortune would mean the loss of liberty. Mechanical regulation of this sort is as ineffective as it may become oppressive, and can never be a satisfactory substitute for the general prosperity which provides labour, and accrues from good government. Instead of fulminating penalties against pauperism, the duke would have been nearer the mark had he tried to eradicate the social and economic abuses which produced pauperism. The true solution of the problem how to combat poverty and vagabondage on a large scale is to make the people prosperous by good government. It was the solution of Sully and Colbert, and it is the only effective one. The duke and Paris Duverney were, however, great believers in artificial remedies. They would provide cheap labour and cheap food by decreeing the reduction of wages and a maximum price of provisions. The only result was to crowd the Bastille and the prisons with refractory workmen and shopkeepers, while the vicious financial experiments,[1] in the shape of frequent alterations of the currency, to which the controller-general Dodin and his mentor, Duverney, had recourse, tended to aggravate the discontent by making prosperity impossible. The suppression or reduction of municipal and chancery offices[2] added to the number of malcontents, without easing the burdens of the people. The bad harvest of 1725 intensified the general misery and anger. The government sought a scapegoat in the ex-war minister, Le Blanc, who was obnoxious to Madame de Prie, and whom it sent before the Parliament to answer for his defalcations,[3] but the populace, in its hatred of the duke and his creatures, made a hero of a man who had the virtue of being the enemy of Paris Duverney and Madame. The Parliament showed its sympathy with the people by winking at the evidence and refusing to convict.[4] Le Blanc was nevertheless sent into exile. The climax of unpopularity was reached when Duverney proposed a property tax of a fiftieth for twelve years, in order to pay off the debt and restore credit.[5] To obviate the opposition of the Parliament, the duke added a regulation that only

[1] See, for instance, Isambert, xxi. 285, and Jobez, La France sous Louis XV., i. 381-386.

[2] Isambert, xxi. 275.

[3] Duclos, 350, 351.

[4] Jobez, ii. 386-388; St Simon, xix. 53 *et seq.*

[5] Isambert, xxi. 289-293 (5th June 1725).

councillors of ten years' standing should have the right of voting and in spite of the expostulations of the advocate-general, who indulged in very plain speaking on the oppression and suffering of the people, both were registered at a *lit de justice* on the 8th June 1725. The popular misery found expression in riots at Paris and throughout the provinces, and the new tax, which infringed the immunity of the privileged classes, ranged, from selfish reasons, the nobles and the clergy, as well as the middle class, on the popular side. The provincial parliaments became the organs of this general opposition, and in denouncing the tax they did not hesitate to declaim against the evils of misgovernment. The people took its revenge by covering Paris with insulting and menacing placards.[1]

In addition to the odium of corruption, oppression, and maladministration, the haphazard government of M. the Duke managed only too well to earn for itself the odium of religious persecution. The orthodoxy of the court was as spotless as its morals were shameless, and it paid for its profligacy by its intolerance. It is not surprising, therefore, that under a government which the people cursed, and in an age which many of the clergy dishonoured by their hypocrisy, there should come a fit of religious zeal to augment the misery of France. The religiosity of the narrow Bishop of Fréjus, who monopolised the direction of ecclesiastical affairs, and the hunt for the red hat had also something to do with it. This time it was the ambition of M. de Tressan to possess this precious article of apparel that made its reactionary influence felt. This enterprising ecclesiastic is said to have dunned out of the regent no fewer than seventy-five benefices, culminating in the archbishopric of Rouen. If he could not pretend to the merit of integrity, he might at least add the merit of zeal for the supremacy of the Church militant against the heretic. This time, therefore, there should be no shred of justice or liberty left to the Protestants. The declaration fulminated against them was an aggravation even of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. It may seem strange that Protestantism had survived the repressive *régime* of Louis XIV. and Le Tellier in sufficient strength to excite a renewal of persecution in so extreme a form; yet a remnant had survived to do honour to a religion which many of its persecutors in high places travestied by their dissolute manners. They still held their secret assemblies for worship and exhortation,[2] and they still had the audacity, it seems, to

[1] See Méms. de D'Argenson, i. 52-54, for details of the popular misery.

[2] See the preamble of the declaration (Isambert, xxi. 261-270; cf. 295, 296), which speaks of "les assemblées illicites."

marry according to the Protestant rite, and educate their children in the Protestant faith. Protestantism was, therefore, forbidden under the penalty of the galleys for life for the men, and perpetual imprisonment for the women, with confiscation of goods for delinquents of both sexes. Death only could atone for the crime of a Protestant preacher who should officiate at a conventicle, and those who should harbour, or fail to denounce such, should be sent to the galleys for life. All children of Protestant parents must be baptized by the priest within twenty-four hours of birth, and educated in a Catholic school. The priest was further authorised to enter the homes of all sick Protestants and administer the sacrament, while any person caught giving heretical instruction or consolation to the sick incurred the penalty of perpetual hard labour in the galleys. No candidate could obtain an appointment in the civil service or a professional license from the universities without a certificate of orthodoxy from the parish priest. Doubtless the priest, armed with powers which were as incompatible with the sacred rights of the family as the duke's sumptuary edicts were with personal liberty, made some converts of new-born babes, and intimidated the dying into acts of sacrilege. France, at all events, suffered in its material interests from the infatuated bigotry of these zealots which swelled the streams of refugees to foreign lands. Sweden, in particular, which took advantage of the declaration to offer the exiles an asylum, gained what France lost.

The foreign policy of M. the Duke was governed by two main considerations—his passion for Madame de Prie and his hatred of the House of Orleans. Under this double influence the diplomacy of these three years displays a singular fluctuation of petty interests, worthy of a passing notice rather for its effects, than for any feature entitled to the name of statesmanship. To oust the young Duke of Orleans from the succession in the event of Louis' death, Bourbon made a secret offer of the reversion of the French crown to the children of Philip V. Philip coupled his acceptance with the condition that France should support his demand for the cession of Gibraltar from the British Government, and guarantee the investiture of Parma and Tuscany to the children of his second wife. The British pension of Madame de Prie[1] was an insuperable obstacle to this concession, especially as Philip refused to promise a rise in the peerage to M. de Prie, who, as an indulgent husband, deserved this consideration, or to guarantee future honours to Madame's children by M. the Duke. The collapse of the negotiation gave rise to

[1] See Duclos, 368.

another, equally creditable to the statesmanship of the duke and his mistress. To oust the hated House of Orleans, it was highly expedient to marry Louis XV. straightway to some princess capable of giving birth to an heir without delay. The Infanta was only seven years of age, and to wait another seven years for this heir was too great a risk to run, especially as Louis was subject to occasional maladies. The Infanta was, therefore, sent across the Pyrenees with a show of respect which only made the insult more exasperating to the Spanish court, and a more desirable spouse was found in Maria Leczynski, daughter of the indigent ex-King of Poland, who was spending a penurious exile at Weissemburg in Alsace (September 1725). The obscurity of the insignificant princess, on whose behalf the duke did not shrink from insulting Philip V., was her best title to fortune. Madame de Prie confidently counted on prolonging her *régime* by means of a queen who owed her good luck to her patronage. The spectacle of an intriguing courtesan overturning a matrimonial alliance of such moment, in accordance with her personal aims, is a striking commentary on the impotence and degradation to which the heir of Louis XIV. was reduced. Still more singular is the fact that the sway of this scheming woman was capable of rearranging the whole machinery of European diplomacy, and just failed to bring about a great European war. Philip V., enraged at the affront to himself and his daughter, vowed vengeance, and once more startled Europe by a bold stroke—this time in the shape of an alliance with Charles VI. The anxiety of Charles to secure support for the Pragmatic Sanction, which devolved the succession to all his hereditary dignities and possessions on his direct female heirs in default of male issue,[1] and his strained relations with Britain and Holland on the score of the Ostend Company, led him to welcome the overtures of Philip. Ripperda, a Dutch adventurer who now occupied Alberoni's place in the confidence of Philip and his wife, was sent to Vienna to patch up an accommodation. The resentment of Philip and the paternal anxiety of Charles took the edge off the keen hostility of the last quarter of a century, and expedited the ambassador's mission. Both undertook to renounce their claims on each other's territories. Charles finally waived the title of King of Spain to which he had adhered, in spite of former treaties, bound himself to use his good offices to secure the restoration of Gibraltar and Port Mahon to Spain, and once more guaranteed the reversion of Parma and Tuscany to one of Philip's sons by his second marriage. In return, Philip agreed to guarantee the Prag-

[1] Dumont, Corps Diplomatique, viii. pt. ii. 103, 104 (December 1724).

matic Sanction, and to accord favourable commercial terms to the subjects of the emperor.[1] The counter-stroke to this combination was the Treaty of Hanover between Britain, France, and Prussia (3rd September 1725), to which Holland and Sweden subsequently adhered.[2] Walpole would fain have avoided a conflict, and disapproved the precipitation of Townshend in concluding the treaty. His aversion to a bellicose policy was only overcome by the assurance that the programme of Philip and Charles included a secret understanding to place the Pretender on the British throne. Philip made no secret of his Jacobite sympathies, at all events. "The king shall enjoy his own again" was publicly played at the Spanish court, and the Duke of Leria did not scruple to declare that it would soon be a crime at Madrid to mention the name of King George. The king's speech at the opening of the British Parliament in 1726 was accordingly couched in a firm tone, and while the British minister dwelt on the desirability of preserving peace, he emphasised the necessity of repelling aggression, and took vigorous military and diplomatic measures against the threatened outbreak.[3] Europe was thus brought to the brink of war because an enterprising courtesan had the audacity and the resource to overturn, for the time being, the system of alliances which had prevailed, with only the short interruption of Alberoni's *régime*, since the commencement of the War of the Spanish Succession.

War was only obviated by the sudden dismissal of Bourbon and the banishment of Madame de Prie in June 1726. For some time before this event it looked as if Madame de Prie, supported by the queen, would prove too strong for Louis' old preceptor and favourite. Fleury had taken the precaution to be always present at the conferences between the king and the duke, and Madame de Prie resolved to shake off this tutelage, and secure for her paramour the power as well as the title of prime minister. One evening Louis was suddenly summoned from the presence of the bishop to the queen's apartment, where he found M. the Duke and Paris Duverney, who engaged him in the discussion of State affairs. The discussion was purposely prolonged, and Fleury, who guessed the reason of the king's protracted absence, determined to accept the challenge, penned a letter, announcing his resolution to retire from the court,

[1] Dumont, Corps Diplomatique, viii. pt. ii. 106-121. Triple Treaty of Vienna, 30th April and 1st May 1725, amplified by a secret verbal engagement.

[2] *Ibid.*, viii. pt. ii. 127-129, 133-135, 141, 142. Denmark also subsequently allied itself with Britain and France, 144-146 (April 1727).

[3] See Coxe's Walpole, i. 428-448.

and took his departure to Issy. The epistle of the wily prelate had the expected effect. Louis retired to sulk in his dressing-room, and the Duke of Montemart, the first gentleman of the chamber, improved the opportunity to obtain a written command to the Duke of Bourbon to recall the fugitive bishop forthwith. Fleury took care to be within easy call, was, in fact, anxiously awaiting at Versailles the expected summons to return.[1] For six months longer he endured the scandalous partnership of minister and mistress in the government of the State, and then put an end to their maladroit political activity by an intrigue which reversed their underhand tactics against himself. On the 11th June 1726, Louis, on leaving Versailles for Rambouillet, smilingly bade the duke adieu with the words, "My cousin, do not keep us waiting for supper." A few hours later, the Duke of Charost, captain of the guards, handed him the written command to retire to his castle of Chantilly till further orders.[2] He survived this merciless blow fourteen years, while Madame de Prie sought relief from the bitterness of disappointment by taking poison in her Norman retreat of Courbépine, and Paris Duverney found a temporary lodging in the Bastille before being banished to Dauphiné.[3]

Fleury, who was born in 1653, had bided his time, and he was seventy-three years old when he assumed an office from which most men of his years would have shrunk. A prudent man, he owed his success in life to this quality rather than to pre-eminent ability. In this respect his career affords a parallel to that of Madame de Maintenon. At the outset he was poor and friendless, and he had to wait long for promotion. He was neither studious nor clever as a student at the Jesuit college of Clermont, at Paris, and owed his rise to eminence entirely to his mastery of the art of intrigue. His supple, deferential manner gained him influential friends, but Louis XIV. kept him at arm's length, partly owing to dislike of the importunities of his patrons, partly on the score of his easy morals. Fleury nevertheless surely, if slowly, gained ground, and became successively almoner to the king, Bishop of Fréjus (1698), and finally preceptor to Louis XV. In order to attract the attention of the court to himself, he played the part of a zealous anti-Jansenist, and

[1] St Simon, xv. 320-322; Duclos, 402, 403.

[2] St Simon, xv. 318; Journal de Barbier, edited for the Société de l'Histoire de France by Villegille, i. 237-239.

[3] Duclos, 404, 405; Barbier, i. 247. Jobez (La France sous Louis XV., ii. 427) makes the strange mistake of post-dating the fall of Bourbon by a year. He also misdates the Treaty of Vienna—30th April 1724, instead of 1725 (ii. 437).

his zeal became animosity when Père Quesnel held him up to ridicule in the preface of one of his controversial writings. He succeeded in earning a reputation for devotion to his episcopal duties as well as zeal for the faith. Nevertheless, like Richelieu, he bore with impatience a situation which he regarded as an exile. The moment he saw his wife, he said pleasantly, he was disgusted with his marriage, and he once humorously signed himself, "Fleury, Bishop of Fréjus by the Divine indignation." At the same time he played the modest, diffident ecclesiastic, who knew not the seduction of ambition, and was content to remain in the background. He left Fréjus on the pretext of ill-health, and his hankering after court life was at last gratified by the post of preceptor to Louis' great-grandson and heir, which he owed to Madame de Maintenon, and carried off in spite of the opposition of Le Tellier.[1] The extreme youth of his pupil robbed the position of political influence during the regency, and the unobtrusive attitude which the bishop affected did not tend to excite the jealousy of the regent or Dubois, whom he strongly disliked. The regent offered him the archbishopric of Reims, which carried with it the distinction of premier duke and peer of finance. Fleury modestly evaded the magnificent offer on the pretext of age and conscientious scruples as to employing a suffragan to perform the duties of so high an office. The real motive of his refusal was the fear of being relegated to his diocese on the expiry of his functions as preceptor, and thus losing his hold on the young monarch.[2] He courted the future and quietly used his opportunities to make himself indispensable to his pupil, whose indolence and shyness rendered him a very tractable subject, and whose confidence and attachment he possessed to the full. He succeeded in securing the guarantee of his future elevation, however, at the expense of the intellectual development of his young charge. Instead of following the method of Fénélon in training an ideal prince, he carefully avoided the risk of stimulating his sluggish mind and dull imagination by the inspiring lessons of history or the models of moral grandeur.[3] The young king, who was remarkable for his beauty and the vulgarity of his tastes, grew up in the hands of the indulgent, prosaic bishop with an aversion to business and a fondness for the mechanical exercises of religion, which augured only too correctly the future nullity of his character. His attachment to his preceptor constituted the most marked feature of the exercise of Fleury's pre-

[1] St Simon, ii. 147-149, xi. 67-70, xii. 144, 159; Journal de Barbier, i. 240, 241; Voltaire, Siècle de Louis XV., 18.

[2] Duclos, 307; Barbier, i. 241.

[3] See St Simon, xvi. 364.

ceptorial functions, and Dubois was compelled to reckon with this fact on attempting to prolong his power after the declaration of the majority of the young monarch. Louis allowed his governor, the intractable Villeroy, who had neglected to gain his affections, to be arrested and exiled to Lyons,[1] but when his preceptor, knowing himself to be indispensable, abruptly disappeared from Versailles at the same time, Dubois was forced to send a royal messenger in haste to bring him back from his retreat.[2] It was, as we have seen, by a similar manœuvre, three years later, that the wily bishop maintained his supremacy against Bourbon, and assured the realisation of his ambition, the supreme direction of affairs and the rank of cardinal. Even in this position his politic modesty waived the title of prime minister. Louis, it was grandly announced, should henceforth rule himself. But the mantle of Louis XIV. had not fallen on his great-grandson. There was no trace of the energy, independence, and comprehensive ambition of the *grand roi* in the indolent, shy youth of seventeen, who was only too happy to leave the direction of affairs to his prudent old preceptor. Fleury was more powerful than Richelieu, St Simon says than Louis XIV.,[3] though he eschewed the ostentation of power, and refrained, with some exceptions, from using it for arbitrary purposes. Louis XV. was even more docile in his hands than Louis XIII. had been in those of the great cardinal. He preferred amusement to labour, and his amusements were for the present confined to hunting and hawking. The passions were as yet dormant, and in comparison with the scandalous *régime* of Orleans and Bourbon, the court under Fleury was outwardly decent.

Like his contemporary, Walpole, Fleury was by disposition and policy a peace minister. During the seventeen years of his administration there is only one short war, which was an eminently successful one, to record. The last two years of his *régime* were, indeed, clouded by portentous storm clouds, but it was sorely against his will, in spite of himself in fact, that France was dragged into the War of the Austrian Succession. This fact alone would entitle his ministry to the distinction of novelty, if regard be had to the long and exhausting conflicts of the reigns of Louis XIII. and Louis XIV. and of the latter half of that of Louis XV. The great object of the aged minister's policy was to preserve the peace of Europe in order to be able, by a rigid economy, to raise the credit and pros-

[1] Journal de Barbier, i. 152-154.

[2] St Simon, xix. 6 *et seq.*; Duclos, 343, 344.

[3] "Jamais roi de France, non pas même Louis XIV., n'a regné d'une manière si absolue, si sûre, si éloignée de toute contradiction" (St Simon, xv. 318).

perity of France. His personal disinterestedness in the matter of money and benefices is above cavil. "Never was there a man less anxious to amass money," says St Simon, "and although he might have obtained with ease whatever he desired, never was there a minister who took so little for himself."[1] He compares favourably in this respect with Colbert, even with Sully. His tastes were simple, and the modesty of his life as all-powerful minister showed that he had not outgrown the habits of his early years of struggling poverty. He carried this Spartan self-denial into the administration of the State. Though impervious to the seductions of gold and luxury, he was, according to St Simon, a very miser for the king, and had no largesses to lavish on the crowd of greedy parasites that knocked at his door. If the spirit of hard-fisted economy could have atoned for the extravagance and financial errors of the previous reign and of the regency, Fleury was the very man to do it. Unfortunately, he had not the financial genius of a Walpole, and his policy of thrift could only claim a partial success. Nothing shows better the radical difference between the fiscal systems of Britain and France at this period than the fact that Walpole succeeded in conferring unexampled prosperity, where the like-minded Fleury failed even with the best intentions of succeeding.

The abolition of the obnoxious property tax,[2] the fixation of the value of the coin, the reduction of the *tailles* and the partial remission of arrears, the curtailment of pensions and the expense of administration were both politic and popular measures. The attempt to suppress a portion of the State debt, without compensation to the creditors—equivalent to a declaration of partial bankruptcy—was, however, a false step, and the general outcry, which was intensified by the remonstrances of the Parliament, compelled Fleury, or rather the finance minister, Orry, whom he substituted for the unpopular Desforts[3] (March 1730), to have recourse to the more honourable plan of borrowing at easy interest to pay off obligations, contracted under more onerous conditions.[4] The best evidence of an improved administration was the rapid increase of the revenue, which in 1733 stood at two hundred millions, in virtue of a corresponding advance in general prosperity. The diminution of the *tailles*, for which Vauban had pleaded, the free exportation of corn, which Boisguilbert had advocated, gave an impetus to agriculture, while commerce and industry throve on the spirit of enterprise which the

[1] Mémoires, xv. 322. [2] Isambert, xxi. 306 (7th July 1727).
[3] Jobez, ii. 513.
[4] Lacretelle. Histoire de France pendant le 18ième. Siècle. ii. 65-60.

government sought to encourage.[1] Unlike Colbert, Fleury had no grand industrial or commercial programme, but while avoiding big schemes, he refrained from excessive regulation, and was at least the well-meaning patron of the general movement, partly begotten of confidence, partly inherited from the experiments of Law.[2] The commercial progress of France, under his auspices, was indeed phenomenal. The rapid growth of the port of Lorient, on the Breton coast — the emporium of the East India Company — attested the great development of the trade with the East. The French Company became the formidable rival of the English and Dutch Companies. Its settlements at Pondicherry and Chandernagor, on the Indian continent, in the isles of Bourbon and France, in the Indian Ocean, became the centres of a rapidly increasing trade which not only enriched the fortunate monopolists of the company, but gave an impetus to production at home. Dupleix and Labourdonnais bade fair to win for France, in spite of the apathy of Fleury, a vast commercial empire in the East. Even more remarkable was the progress of the trade with the French West Indies. The sugar and coffee planters of the French Antilles ousted their rivals of the English and Dutch plantations from the markets of Europe. The result was the rapid growth of the French mercantile marine, which increased from 300 vessels at the advent of Law, to 1,800 under Fleury's ministry.

The administration of Fleury was nevertheless far from being an ideal one,[3] and during the latter half of it there was much misery among the people. The failure of the harvest of 1737 and the following year produced terrible suffering in many of the provinces.[4] The peasants were subsisting on herbs and dying in multitudes while the court of Louis XV. was enjoying halcyon days in celebration of the conclusion of peace with the emperor, and the marriage of Louis' eldest daughter with Don Philip of Spain in 1739.[5] The angry comments of the starving peasants were repeated in Louis' presence by outspoken critics like the Bishop of Chartres, the Duke of Orleans, and Lecamus, president of the Court of Aides. "Behold, sire," said the Duke of Orleans, offering the king a piece of bread at

[1] See, for instance, Isambert, xxi. 306, for edict establishing an annual commercial assembly of deputies of chief towns; cf. 333, establishment of Council of Commerce.

[2] For the efforts of the government, not all of them wise, to induce prosperity, see, besides Isambert, Bailly, Hist. Financière, ii. 110-115, and Jobez, iii. 44-63.

[3] For sharp criticisms of Fleury's administration see St Simon, xv. 323-325.

[4] Journal de D'Argenson, i. 279; ii. 165, 166, 194.

[5] *Ibid.*, ii. 240, 245-247; Journal de Barbier, ii. 236-243.

a sitting of the Council of State, "the nourishment on which your subjects keep body and soul together." "Your subjects eat grass like sheep," said the Bishop of Chartres, "and are dying like flies. Soon," he added significantly, "we shall have the pestilence, which will prey upon others beside the poor." The government was not responsible for the weather, but it was responsible for the heavy taxation, which took little or no account of the popular wretchedness, and was wasted so largely in profusion. The controller-general ignored the starvation which was devastating the provinces, as long as Paris had enough to eat, and remained passive. He made a spasmodic effort, in view of the contingency of want in the capital, to improve the highways, and thus increase the facilities for the transport of grain. This device, which only the labour of years could have rendered effective, could bring little immediate relief, while it exposed the peasants to the new hardship of giving forced labour for the public works. Hitherto the *corvée* had been merely a feudal obligation, and a sufficiently onerous one, which the peasant was bound to fulfil towards his superior. Now the government stepped in, and in the person of the intendant, the State as well as the lord of the manor became the taskmaster of the poor man. Not content with taxing his time, the government laid its ruthless hands on the chattels of the peasant who could not pay his taxes. The peasant might cry out and bewail his ruin, but the outcry did not disturb the equanimity of the controller-general,[1] or the selfish *habitués* of Versailles or Choisy. It was a different thing when the sufferings of a starving peasantry made themselves felt in dearth and dearness of bread in the Parisian faubourgs. In September 1740 Louis was assailed with cries of "Misery, famine, bread," whilst driving through the Faubourg St Victor to Choisy.[2] This unwonted greeting made a passing impression on the monarch, who forthwith gave orders to stop the works in progress at Choisy. The order only served to throw a large number of workmen idle, and Fleury had the sense to countermand it, but he had not the ability, if he had the will, to combat the demon of hunger that continued to ravage the capital as well as the provinces during the terrible winter of 1740. The terrible winter was followed by a diluvial summer, and another bad harvest. The government established granaries for the supply of the capital and fixed the price of grain, while the people of the provinces forced the cultivators, who kept back their produce in the hope of enhanced gain, to bring their corn to the market, and joined in processions for the cessation of frost or flood. These desperate

[1] See D'Argenson, ii. 153.

[2] See *ibid.*, iii. 171, 172.

methods brought some alleviation, but they were not sufficient to check the fearful mortality, which equalled that of the worst period of Louis XIV.'s reign. It was estimated that from 1738 to 1740 the number of the victims of privation was greater than that which had perished during the wars of the previous reign.[1] "Everybody is in revolt, and the worst is to be feared," notes D'Argenson, ominously, on the 19th September 1740. A few days later his fears were partially realised. At Bicetre, near Choisy, the starving prisoners forced the guard and took to flight, leaving forty or fifty of their number dead on the pavement.[2] The mob of Paris threatened to burn the hôtel of the controller-general, and held up the carriage of the cardinal himself, who only escaped by emptying the contents of his purse among the starving women that rent the air with their piteous cries.[3]

The ministry of Fleury witnessed the revival of the bitter controversy between Jansenists and Ultramontanes. The modified acceptance of the Bull by Cardinal Noailles and its registration by the Parliament, which Dubois had manipulated in 1720, had only adjourned the dispute, and shortly after the accession of Fleury, the electricity with which the theological atmosphere was charged exploded at the Council of Embrun. In itself the Bull has for us no more interest than that of a theological abortion. The quarrel of Jansenist and Ultramontane over grace and predestination is a quarrel about quibbles, to which the theological polemic may, with our best blessing, be referred. Had the dispute been merely a controversy between contentious doctors and bishops, and a handy pretext for winning the red hat to a Dubois, a Tencin, a Rohan, a Lifiteau, it would hardly merit a passing notice. The Bull became, however, the subject of a grand constitutional debate. It revived the old question of the limits of the papal power, and it afforded to the Parliament a pretext for the assertion of its claim to oppose the acts of an arbitrary government. From this point of view the controversy is important, though its details are dreary reading. The significant fact is that the Parliament is becoming increasingly self-assertive as against the government, and even the Crown. Its resurrection in opposition to Fleury, after three-quarters of a century of lethargy under the spell of absolute monarchy, means much for France. Its awakening dates, as we have seen, from the death of Louis XIV. The restoration of the right of remonstrance galvanised it into new

[1] For details see D'Argenson, iii. 6, 76, 84, 95, 125, 126, 131, 135, 167-173, 215, etc.

[2] *Ibid.*, iii. 173.

[3] *Ibid.*, iii. 172.

life, and even during the regency, though it maintained no resolute attitude, its pretensions to be a controlling factor in legislation were very high. "It would seem," said D'Argenson, at the famous *lit de justice* on the 21st August 1718, "that the Parliament has carried its enterprise to the length of pretending that the king can do nothing without its consent, and that the Parliament has no need of the order and permission of his majesty to ordain whatever it pleases. Thus the Parliament having the power to do all without the king, and the king having no power without the Parliament, the latter would soon become the indispensable legislator of the kingdom, and it would only be by its pleasure that his majesty would make known to his subjects his intentions."[1] During the regency its opposition was spasmodic and ineffectual. It succumbed to the threat or the *ennui* of exile, and registered the Bull for the sake of being recalled from Pontoise in December 1720.[2] Under the ministry of M. the Duke, it opposed the obnoxious property tax, but it did not dare as yet to challenge the authority of the *lit de justice*, which ordered its acquiescence. Under Fleury it burst the restraint of a tradition of fully three-quarters of a century, and made a determined effort to vindicate its right to resist coercion. It challenged, in the spirit of the Fronde, the claims and the actions of absolute monarchy, though at first it professed to recognise the theory of the absolute sovereignty of the Crown, and to act in defence of both king and law against the encroachments of the ecclesiastical jurisdiction. As the century progressed, however, it propounded doctrines which tended to subvert that power. In so doing, it ignored the objection that as a court of justice, with very limited political functions, it was not a representative body, and acted on the assumption that it was a legislative as well as a legal court, the guardian of liberty as well as the administrator of the law. While its claim had no historic or constitutional basis, it was at least morally justifiable, on the ground that, in the absence of the States-General, it was the only effective check on arbitrary power. Its courage and its determination rose with the elevation of its conceptions.

The signal for the renewal of the strife over the Bull was given by Soanen, the aged Bishop of Senez, who, on the 28th August 1727, published a pastoral against its errors. The bishop refused to retract at a provincial council held at Embrun, and presided over by Archbishop Tencin, the corrupt spiritual father of Law, who meanwhile had obtained high ecclesiastical rank, was suspended for heresy and insubordination, and appealed both to a General Council and to the

[1] Voltaire, Hist. du Parlement, 344. [2] *Ibid.*, 348, 349.

Parliament (*appel comme d'abus*).[1] Great was the excitement of the Jansenists, who found staunch champions among a section of the bishops and among a much larger section of the clergy, the advocates, and the bourgoisie of the capital.[2] The excitement was increased by a declaration issued by Cardinal Noailles, who turned Jansenist and anti-Jansenist by fits, in favour of the Bull (October 1728).[3] It was followed by a shower of Jansenist invectives.[4] Miracles, too, were operated in support of their tenets at the tomb of the deacon Paris, a popular exponent of Jansenism and a violent opponent of the Jesuits. From early morning till sunset crowds of sufferers pressed into the cemetery of St Medard[5] to earn, in some cases, a strange amelioration of their ills, and to excite by their exaltation the devotion of the majority, the incredulity of the few, until the cemetery was closed by order of the government.[6] The Jesuits sought an antidote at the tomb of Père Gourdan,[7] a monk of Saint Victor, whose holy memory did not fail the fathers in this emergency, and produced a series of opposition miracles. To assuage the excitement Fleury determined to have the Bull registered anew by the Parliament without any modification whatsoever, as an authoritative article of faith. Personally his sympathies were with the Ultramontanes, and he had already given emphatic expression to his respect for the immunities and privileges of the clergy. "We have regarded it as an essential part of our duty," Louis was made to say in a declaration concerning the clergy (8th October 1726), "since we took upon ourselves the government of the kingdom, to take particular care that the immunities attached to the property of the Church be inviolably conserved, and that for the future no encroachments shall be permitted thereon, on any pretext whatsoever."[8] Both monarch and minister therefore zealously took the side of the advocates of the Bull and the independent jurisdiction of the bishops, as against the Parliament and the Jansenists, and legalised this document in the most express terms at a *lit de justice* on the 24th March 1730.[9] The majority of the Parliament, led by the Abbé Pucelle

[1] Journal de Barbier, i. 262-264. Barbier is a voluminous and valuable authority on this controversy.

[2] *Ibid.*, 263, 264.

[3] *Ibid.*, i. 272, 275, 276, 281, 282.

[4] *Ibid.*, i. 282-284.

[5] *Ibid.*, i. 287, 352, 353, 367, 368.

[6] Isambert, xxi. 369 (January 1732). This inhibition was ridiculed by a wag in the lines:—

"De part le roi, defense a Dieu
De faire miracle en ce lieu."

[7] Barbier, i. 288.

[8] Isambert, xxi. 301-303.

[9] Isambert, xxi. 330-332.

refused to recognise the royal declaration. Fleury responded by an order forbidding further deliberation on the subject. The majority, supported by the Chambers of Inquests and Requests, continued to deliberate notwithstanding, and in spite of the retirement of the first president, Portail.[1] In so doing, the majority, contended the Abbé Pucelle, intended no disrespect to the sovereign, but it could not surrender its right of deliberation to an arbitrary government. The next move on the part of Fleury was to summon the refractory councillors to Fontainebleau to listen to the personal reprimand of the king, and to receive, through D'Aguesseau, the chancellor, the order to cease disobedience.[2] Baulked for the nonce, the Parliament found a new channel for its opposition in receiving appeals against the persecuting tactics and violent manifestoes of some of the anti-Jansenist bishops,[3] and on this ground summoned the new Archbishop of Paris, Vintimille, to its bar. The government intervened on behalf of the archbishop, who had published an aggressive mandate against the Jansenist advocates of Paris, and forbade further procedure (10th April 1731).[4] The exaltation of the royal power against Pope and Ultramontanists ought to have been gratifying to the king, but Louis held that he was the sole judge in such matters, and that, once his will declared, the Parliament had no right to interfere.[5] A large section of the advocates showed its resentment by ceasing to plead,[6] and persisted in this attitude amid the applause of the people, in spite of the exile by *lettres de cachet* of several of its members. The Parliament waived its suit against the archbishop, but it maintained its opposition in the form of a decree affirming the independence of the temporal power as ordained by God, and its sole constraining authority over the subject, and declaring null and void any encroachment by the spiritual power on the laws (7th September 1731).[7] The government replied with a counter-decree, which enjoined the acceptance of the Bull as "a judgment of the Church universal," reserved to the king in council all legislation in such matters, and annulled that of the Parliament as derogatory to the royal authority.[8]

The court assembled in November after the vacation in no compliant mood, and instead of receiving a royal letter intimating the decision of the king, demanded of the first president, Portail, an account of the fate of its decree of 7th September. Portail an-

[1] Barbier, i. 308 *et seq.* [2] *Ibid.*, i. 322. [3] *Ibid.*, i., 329, 330.
[4] *Ibid.*, i. 340. [5] Isambert, xxi. 375. [6] Barbier, i. 330 *et seq.*
[7] See Isambert, xxi. 332; cf. 354-356 and 366.
[8] *Ibid.*, xxi. 366, 367 (9th September 1731); Barbier, i. 364, 365.

swered that he had been forbidden by the king to refer further to the matter, and proposed to open the royal letter. To this the Parliament objected, and president and assembly sat for three hours facing each other in silence, and helping themselves to liberal pinches of snuff (*prenant du tabac*, as Barbier has it). "Monsieur," at length burst out M. de St Martin, "do you think that we must wait for the lamps in order to get more light, whilst such a blazing sun is shining?"[1] With this interrogatory he marched out of the hall followed by his confreres. On the morrow, the president read another royal letter commanding the Parliament to open the first on pain of rebellion for refusal. "Rebellion," cried the Abbé Pucelle; "it is a sad thing to have to choose between two alternatives—disobedience to the king and disobedience to duty. Far from intimidating me, this menace only reanimates my zeal and my courage. The king is master of my fortune and my liberty, but of all the penalties he can impose, not one can force me to betray my conscience by violating the oath which I have taken. . . . Let the first president remember the speeches of his predecessors, La Vacquerie and Le Jay; he will therein find the language in which he ought to address the king." "To Marly, to Marly," shouted the applauding councillors. Louis refused to see them, and the irate abbé, as their spokesman, vented their indignation at this humiliation on Fleury.[2] "You have disgraced the Parliament, and posterity will repeat against you the reproach that the Parliament *en corps* has been refused admission to the presence of the king." "The Council of State has refused us a hearing," he exclaimed bitterly, at a subsequent sitting. "If we speak, we are enjoined silence; if we deliberate, we are menaced. There only remains for us to demit our functions." To this alternative they were gradually being driven by the autocratic tactics of the king, who, inspired by Fleury and the chancellor, was determined to browbeat all opposition to his will by renewed threats of violence. "The king knows the whole extent of the rights of the supreme power," exclaimed D'Aguesseau, to a deputation of the Parliament, summoned to Versailles on the 9th January 1732, "and he will see to it that they suffer no infringement. Those who elude his orders are rebels." "This is my will," added Louis, "have a care that you do not force me to make you feel that I am master."[3] The intensified persecution of the Jansenists afforded the refractory members an opportunity for showing that they were not disposed to submit to this mastery in matters in which the maintenance of the law was at stake against what they deemed the unwarrant-

[1] Barbier, i. 378. [2] *Ibid.*, i. 378, 379. [3] *Ibid.* i., 388, 389.

able encroachment of the rights of the subject. If the Parliament had not the wider sense of these rights, which would have included the protection of the Protestants, in whose favour Fleury deserves the merit of relaxing somewhat the rigour of the edict of 1724, as well as of the Jansenists, it was not inclined to let the persecuting bishops act on the assumption that they were responsible to God only for the exercise of their authority in all things, temporal as well as spiritual. If only it had had the humanity, not to say public spirit, to protest on principle against the abuse of persecution, it would have merited the full sympathy of posterity. With this reservation, its attitude was on the side of progress, and it was determined to vindicate it. It had recourse to its former tactics of receiving appeals against the abuse of the ecclesiastical authority, which was giving rise to the most tumultuous scenes at Paris. The government once more met these tactics with interdiction. "The king," retorted the Abbé Pucelle, "is master of our lives and goods, but not of our consciences." "The verbal orders of the king," cried others, "have no more power over the Parliament than his *lettres de jussion*, against which it has so often remonstrated." Another summons to the royal presence, this time at Compiègne, was the result (13th May 1732). "I have made known to you my will," said Louis, "and I wish it to be obeyed absolutely. I will permit no remonstrance or reply whatsoever. You have only too well merited my indignation." "Hold your peace," he burst out, as the first president was about to speak. Thereupon the Abbé Pucelle interposed on his knees, and placed a written statement, drawn up by the Parliament, at the king's feet. "Tear it in pieces," cried the king angrily to Maurepas, the minister of marine, who instantly obeyed. The baffled deputation was still further irritated by the seizure of the Abbé Pucelle, who was exiled to Corbigny, on the way back to Paris. His arrest was followed by that of Titon, another outspoken member of the opposition, who was lodged in Vincennes. Several other members subsequently shared their fate.[1] Against this high-handed procedure the Parliament protested by ceasing its functions, resumed them in deference to letters patent, which it registered, along with a declaration that it adhered to its contentions, and took up once more the appeal against the archbishop. Thereupon followed a fresh summons to Compiègne,[2] and renewed menaces, to which the Parliament responded by a second demission of its functions. All Paris applauded the act. "Behold true Romans, the fathers of their country," shouted the crowd as the members, with the exception of the Grand Chamber,

[1] Barbier, i. 412-416. [2] *Ibid.*, i. 425-429.

passed in procession through the streets to lay their resignations in the hands of the first president.[1] On the other hand, the people showed its hatred of the servile members of the Grand Chamber by invading the Palace of Justice and forcing them to retire. The deadlock was ended by the first president, who took upon himself, unknown to his refractory colleagues, to supplicate the king's pardon in their name. The Parliament took advantage of this pretext to renew its sittings, but only to demand the recall of its exiled members and the revocation of the edict of the 9th September 1731. The answer of the government was a declaration (18th August 1732), affirming the validity of the royal decrees from the date of publication, even in case of remonstrance against the same, permitting the right of remonstrance, but enjoining obedience to the royal will duly declared after examination of said remonstrance, as finally authoritative, limiting the hearing of appeals to the Grand Chamber only, interdicting the separate assemblies of the Courts of Inquests and Requests, and forbidding the cessation of their functions by the members of the Parliament on pain of deprivation of office.[2] The Parliament signalised its refusal to comply with the royal will by again ceasing to perform its functions, and Louis determined to crush its resistance by holding a *lit de justice* at Marly to enforce the registration of the declaration (3rd September).[3] Even the *lit de justice* failed of effect. The Parliament, supported by the advocates and the people, simply ignored it, renewed its remonstrances, and resolved to remain in permanent session. It should, therefore, at last feel the royal vengeance. One hundred and thirty-nine councillors followed the Abbé Pucelle into exile as the punishment of their obduracy.[4] They had their revenge in the fierce invectives of the people, not merely against the government, but against the king. The veneration for royalty received a rude shock in some of these popular diatribes. Witness the following:—

'Timide, imbecile, farouche,
Jamais Louis ne dit un mot,
Pour tonner, il ouvre le bouche,
Est-ce un tyran? Non, c'est un sot."

In the face of this storm, the government hesitated and then ceded. On the 1st December, the exiles returned to Paris, and Louis revoked the declaration of the 18th August. The first president, in conveying the thanks of the Parliament, made up for this con-

[1] Barbier, i. 430.
[2] Isambert, xxi. 374-378; Barbier, i. 447, 448.
[3] Barbier, i. 455, 456.
[4] Barbier, i. 459.

cession by the servile warmth of his recognition of the absolute power of the sovereign. "We recognise the whole extent of your sovereign and absolute power, we respect it, we shall always be ready to exemplify it to your subjects. We know that you are our master, and that it is yours to command and ours to obey." This might be true as an official declaration. The Parliament had shown, by its action, however, that there were times and circumstances when it was not disposed to accept royal dictation without question, and that it was ready to suffer for resistance.[1]

The great object of Fleury's foreign policy was to nurse peace. Peace and economy were the watchwords of his administration. He showed a spirit of moderation towards his neighbours which contrasted with the harsh intolerance of his attitude towards the Jansenists and the Protestants. This moderation has incurred the reproach of being unstatesmanlike and unpatriotic. It has been decried as the policy of an egotistic octogenarian, who undertook the government of France as the pastime of his old age, and carefully kept from the management of affairs all the vigour and genius of his day.[2] He has even been represented as artfully encouraging the sensual proclivities of the young king in order to enjoy the undisturbed possession of power.[3] His panegyrists have been few, his critics numerous.[4] Fleury, judges Michelet, copying the remark of the bellicose Marshal Villars, made France the laughing-stock of Europe. He is simply a dotard who sacrifices the Jansenists to the Pope, and France to the Walpoles. St Simon is as hostile a critic as Villars of the Anglophile policy of the cardinal. Such criticisms are misleading. The cardinal was not a genius by any means; he was a man of routine and tradition; but it surely is not in itself a crime in a minister to eschew war as the worst of calamities, and to use his power and his opportunities to avoid it. A decade without a war was, it would seem, an abnormity to those accustomed to the interminable record of human slaughter. Fleury represents in a marked manner the reaction against the militarism of the seventeenth century, and surely, in view of the miseries which the passion of military glory had bequeathed to France and

[1] For this controversy, see besides Isambert and Barbier, Jobez, La France sous Louis XV., ii. and iii.; Voltaire, Hist. du Parlement, Œuvres, xiii. 351-354; Lacretelle, Hist. de France pendant le 18ième. Siècle, ii. 71-98; Martin, Histoire de France, xv. 160-167.

[2] This is the tone adopted by D'Argenson in his journal.

[3] Blanc, Hist. de la Revolution Française, i. 423, 424.

[4] Among his apologists are the Duke of Noailles (Mémoires, iii. 194, 195), and the author of the Vie Privée de Louis XV. (i. 149, 150).

Europe, the reaction was defensible. Nothing easier than to turn Europe once more into one vast battlefield. The Austro-Spanish Alliance and the Treaty of Hanover had arrayed the nations into two hostile camps. M. the Duke had laid the train, and Fleury had merely to apply the match. At his accession Spain and Great Britain were arming for the struggle, and Philip V., relying on the promised support of the emperor, laid siege to Gibraltar within eight months after that event. Here was a grand opportunity for writing history in the blood of the nations. Fleury was too timid and too humane for this sort of statesmanship, and happily, the man who governed Great Britain was of a similarly pacific disposition. The king's speech to Parliament in 1724 struck the keynote of Sir Robert Walpole's policy. "Peace with all the Powers abroad, at home perfect tranquillity, plenty, and an uninterrupted enjoyment of all civil and religious rights."[1] Fleury concocted with Robert Walpole who was strong enough to survive the advent of George II., and with his brother Horace, British ambassador to France, a conspiracy of peace, and the bitter insinuation of St Simon, that this pacific co-operation was a conspiracy against France is without foundation.[2] Walpole had received considerable provocation to go on the war-path, and the anger of the British public at a manifesto published by Palm, the imperial minister at the court of St James, in which he appealed to the nation against the policy of Walpole, would have furnished a popular pretext for a declaration of war against the allies. The attack on Gibraltar (February 1727) was a direct challenge, and Walpole took it up so far as to defend stoutly this bulwark of British power. The strain became so intense that Palm was ordered to leave the king's dominions, and the British minister at Vienna quitted Austrian territory. Great Britain, ready for war, in spite of the defection of Prussia from the alliance of Hanover, might expect an easy triumph over an antagonist whose resources were limited, and whose alliance with the emperor, backed though it was by Russia and Prussia,[3] was a poor guarantee of active co-operation. Walpole nevertheless, exerted himself to restrain the bellicose feeling of the country, and he was nobly seconded by Fleury, whom the Queen of Spain stigmatised as a coward, "wholly governed by that heretic Horace Walpole."[4] They succeeded in negotiating the preliminaries of an accommodation with the emperor, who agreed to suspend the Ostend Company for seven years, and to refer for settlement all

[1] Coxe's Walpole, i. 160. [2] See St Simon, xv. 324-333.
[3] Dumont, Corps Dip., viii. pt. ii. 131 *et seq.* (August 1726).
[4] Coxe's Walpole, i. 450, and see St Simon, xv. 325.

conflicting points to a congress of the Powers (Preliminaries of Paris, 31st May 1727).[1] Thus isolated, Philip was ultimately forced to follow the imperial lead, and add his signature to the Preliminaries of Paris. The hope of inaugurating a new Austro-Spanish domination in Europe, bound up with the hope of a Jacobite revolution in Great Britain—the chimera of the Spanish queen and her mentor, Ripperda, who had by this time followed Alberoni into exile—had proved to be a political mirage. The transaction did honour to both Fleury and Walpole, though the alloy of egotism, shown in the jealousy of a rival commercial company, mars somewhat the purity of Walpole's humanitarian professions. "The love of peace," he remarked, in the king's speech at the opening of Parliament, "has hitherto prevailed in me, even under this high provocation to respond in some measure by resentments, and instead of having immediate recourse to arms, and demanding of my allies that assistance which they are engaged and ready to give, I have concurred with the most Christian king and the States-General in making such overtures of accommodation as must convince all the world of the uprightness of our intentions, and of our sincere disposition to peace."[2]

Fleury and Walpole are the first European statesmen who, since the days of Henry IV. and Sully, really made it their business, on principle and by policy, to keep Europe out of war. Fleury's share of the work deserves more recognition than the critics have deigned to expend on it. To reconcile so many conflicting interests in the service of peace was certainly not the act of a priest in his dotage, but of a philanthropic statesman of considerable diplomatic ability. We shall only too soon have evidence enough what mischief the bellicose men wrought both to France and Europe by their departure from Fleury's motto. For a short period in European history—alas, all too short—war is regarded in high places as a crime against the people. The preservation of neighbourly relations carries it over militarism. Intriguing women like the Queen of Spain, who would callously slaughter several hundred thousand men that her precious son might occupy the glorious throne of an Italian duchy, are for the present snuffed into insignificance in the cabinets of Versailles and St James.[3]

The death of George I. shortly after (June 1727) threatened for

[1] Dumont, viii. pt. ii. 146-148. [2] Coxe's Walpole, i. 457.

[3] Though Walpole took a deep interest in foreign affairs, and exercised considerable influence on the decisions of the cabinet, it was not till the retirement of Townshend in 1730 that he assumed control of the negotiations with foreign powers (Coxe, ii. 126, 127).

a moment to disconcert the pacific union of the two statesmen. Happily for the peace of Europe, the influence of Queen Caroline ensured the permanence of Walpole's power. The new king wrote a letter to Fleury announcing his intention to continue the policy and retain the minister of his father.[1] Both were thus enabled to pursue the work of reconciliation at the Congress of Soissons, which met to discuss a definite arrangement of the questions in dispute between the Powers. The Pragmatic Sanction, the concession of Parma and Tuscany to Don Carlos, the suppression of the Ostend Company, the restitution of Gibraltar, were the conflicting points which baffled even Fleury's conciliatory disposition to harmonise. The congress settled nothing, but Fleury and Walpole took advantage of the growing friction between Philip and the emperor on the question of the Italian duchies to break up the Austro-Spanish alliance, and replace it by the Treaty of Seville[2] (November 1729), between Britain, France, Spain, and Holland. By this treaty Philip undertook to support the demand for the suppression of the Ostend Company, to restore the commercial privileges of Britain in the trade with Spanish America, and to waive the restitution of Gibraltar, while the allies agreed to ensure to Don Carlos the succession to the Italian duchies by the introduction of 6,000 Spanish troops into certain garrison towns of Parma and Tuscany. The emperor was now in his turn isolated, and ultimately, after an unsuccessful effort to nullify the Treaty of Seville by the offer of all concessions to Britain and France, was compelled to accede, on the death of the Duke of Parma, in the beginning of 1731, to the proposed occupation[3] of the duchy by a Spanish force, and to practically suppress the Ostend Company, in return for the guarantee of the Pragmatic Sanction by Britain, Holland, and ultimately Spain (Treaty of Vienna, March 1731).[4] The Queen of Spain had the satisfaction of seeing her son Duke of Parma, and heir-presumptive of the Duke of Tuscany, after thirteen years of incessant intrigues, which had more than once menaced the tranquillity of Europe. The conclusion of the treaty by Walpole without the co-operation of Fleury, who was no friend of the Pragmatic Sanction, occasioned a temporary coolness between the two statesmen, which was happily dispelled by the assurance of the desire of the British Government to continue friendly relations.[5] The Pragmatic Sanction still remained as a possible cause of embroilment, for though Russia, Denmark, and

[1] Coxe, ii. 30.
[2] Dumont, viii. pt. ii. 158-161.
[3] The Spaniards did not take possession till June 1732.
[4] Dumont, viii. pt. ii. 213, 214.
[5] Coxe, ii. 144, 145.

most of the German princes[1] followed the example of Great Britain, Holland, and Spain, Fleury persisted in his refusal. It was now the turn of France to be isolated over an important question of international politics, but the comparative youth of the Emperor Charles promised to ward off a crisis for many years.

A prolonged peace seemed assured, when another dynastic question suddenly quickened the diplomatic pulse of Europe, and dragged even Fleury into a struggle with the emperor. The death of August II., Elector of Saxony and King of Poland, raised the question of the succession to the Polish throne. Who was to be his successor—the ex-King Stanislaus, whom August II. had ousted from the throne on a former occasion, or the son of the latter? Stanislaus had expressly renounced his claim to the Polish throne on the marriage of his daughter to Louis XV., and this renunciation afforded an honourable pretext for the neutrality of France and the preservation of peace. Fleury would fain have abstained from interference on this ground. To support the candidature of Stanislaus was to invite complications which must end in war with the Czarina Anne and the emperor, who were resolved to secure the election of his rival. To send a powerful French fleet into the Baltic to support his rights would, moreover, encounter the opposition of Great Britain, and strain, if it did not rupture, the cordial relations on which the peace of Europe seemed to depend. Fleury, however, was unable to resist the bellicose feeling of the court and the royal council. An appeal by the Polish primate to Louis to protect the liberty of election and the independence of Poland turned the balance in favour of intervention, and on the strength of this resolution, Stanislaus was elected by a vast majority of the Polish nobility[2] (September 1733). No king had ever a better title to reign, and no Power had ever a better pretext to enforce the title of its *protégé* than that which the almost unanimous election of the popular Stanislaus afforded to Fleury. Nevertheless, he hesitated to brave the hostility of Russia, Austria, and Prussia, who had allied themselves against the claims of Stanislaus, and the opposition of Great Britain, and adopted the worst possible expedient for saving the pledged word of Louis XV. He despatched a squadron with 1,500 men to Danzig. The paucity of the expeditionary force deprived it in the eyes of Walpole of the semblance of a serious attempt to increase the power of France in the Baltic, but it rendered its failure certain. It was a sorry exhibition of vacillation

[1] Dumont, Supplement, iii. 334, 335.

[2] Dumont, Corps Dip., Supplement, iii. 423 *et seq.*

and timidity, and contrasted with the energy with which the czarina and the emperor espoused the claims of the Elector of Saxony, who had secured the emperor by the offer to accept the Pragmatic Sanction, and had bribed the ministers of the czarina with the promise of a substantial reward in Polish territory for their compliance. Even before the election of Stanislaus, a Russian army was on the march to Warsaw to proclaim August III., and a large imperial force was concentrated in Silesia ready to cross the frontier. To oppose these formidable forces was hopeless. Stanislaus was compelled to retire to Danzig, which was besieged by the Russian general Munich, to await the arrival of French reinforcements. Fleury's small expedition entered the roads of Danzig in May 1734, and disembarked at the mouth of the Vistula. To attempt with 1,500 men the relief of a city besieged by an army of 30,000, was madness. The French commander was no Don Quixote, and sailed away to Copenhagen. There the expedition found in Count Plelo, the French ambassador, a leader who determined to wipe off what he deemed the disgrace of this exhibition of weakness. He succeeded in inspiring its commander with his own heroic spirit, and led back the devoted band to the mouth of the Vistula. His heroism was unavailing. A forlorn attack on the Russian lines failed, and the city shortly after capitulated. Stanislaus succeeded in escaping to Königsberg, and returned to France, which had already thrown down the gauntlet to the emperor on the Rhine and in Italy.

Animated by Chauvelin, the keeper of the seals, Belleisle, and a noisy war party, Fleury, after shrinking from prosecuting a war on behalf of the independence of one nation, was forced into a war of aggression against the independence of another. The ambition of the King of Sardinia and the Queen of Spain afforded a handle for an aggressive alliance whose ostensible purpose was the expulsion of the Austrian domination from Italy. Naples and Sicily were to be conquered for Don Carlos, Milan for Charles Emmanuel. Savoy was to be the price of French co-operation in this plan of spoliation which passed under the name of the liberation of Italy. Walpole, absorbed with his Excise Bill, raised no objection to this bellicose departure on the part of Fleury, after being assured that Belgium would not be attacked. Holland likewise remained passive, and the emperor was left by his old allies to maintain the struggle with the traditional enemy single-handed.

War was, accordingly, declared in October 1733.[1] The aged

[1] See Declaration of War by the Kings of France, Spain, and Sardinia against the emperor, Dumont, Sup., iii. 457-467.

Marshal Villars assumed the command-in-chief of the allied armies beyond the Alps, while Berwick commanded on the Rhine. Villars was not destined to witness the conquest of Italy, which he had promised to achieve on taking leave of Fleury. The valorous octogenarian—almost the last link with the military generation of Louis XIV.—succumbed to the fatigue of the opening operations of the campaign. His successor, Marshal Coigni, shared with Charles Emmanuel the merit of the hardly-contested battles of Parma and Guastalla, which the Franco-Piedmontese army won during the summer of 1734 (29th June and 19th September). The resource and activity of Königsegg rendered these bloody victories indecisive, but that of Bitonto, won by the Spanish general Montemar over the Austrians in Naples, and followed by the easy conquest of Sicily in the winter of 1735, made Don Carlos undisputed master of the Austrian possessions in the south of the peninsula. Montemar then marched north to join Marshal Noailles, who had replaced Coigni, and by the middle of the summer of 1735 Königsegg was compelled to retire into the Tyrol before the advance of the allies. These successes were disgraced by the scandalous demoralisation of the French army,[1] whose excesses rendered this expedition the prototype, in this respect, of the more famous Italian campaign of Napoleon in 1796. On the side of the Rhine, where Berwick, and after his death in the trenches before Philipsburg, Asfeld and Coigni, held in check no less distinguished an antagonist than Prince Eugene himself, the operations, though less memorable, were also advantageous to the French. At this stage an armistice was proposed by Britain and Holland, of whose mediation both belligerents consented to avail themselves, in order to put an end to further hostilities. The Maritime Powers proposed that the allies should recognise August III. as King of Poland, and the emperor Don Carlos as King of Naples and Sicily, in return for the cession by Don Carlos of his rights to Parma and of Tuscany to the emperor, that Charles Emmanuel should be indemnified by the acquisition of Tortona and Novara, that France and Sardinia should guarantee the Pragmatic Sanction and restore the rest of their conquests to Charles VI., and that Stanislaus should retain the title of king.[2] The emperor was disposed to accept terms so favourable to a Power which had been worsted on all hands in the course of two short campaigns. The allies demurred. Fleury was powerless either to secure the adhesion of the greedy Queen of Spain to the renunciation of the Italian duchies, or to render the proposal to ignore the

[1] See Mém. d. Noailles, iii. 237-239. [2] Dumont, Sup., iii. 529, 530.

claim of Stanislaus to compensation for the loss of the Polish crown palatable to the French court. Chauvelin, the minister for foreign affairs, was too adroit and energetic a statesman to suffer Fleury to come off empty-handed, and pressed for the entire expulsion of the Austrian domination from Italy, or at least some substantial compensation for France. The representations of Chauvelin prevailed over those of Walpole, and Fleury reluctantly entered into direct negotiations with the emperor. The result was the signature of preliminaries of peace[1] between France and Austria, which gave Stanislaus the Duchies of Lorraine and Bar, with reversion to the French crown, the Duke of Lorraine to receive Tuscany in exchange, on the death of the Grand Duke. The other terms were the same as those contained in the proposal of the Maritime Powers. Spain and Sardinia at length gave an unwilling consent to this arrangement (Treaty of Vienna, 1738), which left the emperor in possession of Milan and Parma, and, through the marriage of the new duke, Francis of Lorraine, with his daughter Maria Theresa, practically made him master of Tuscany as well. The policy of liberating Italy from the domination of the House of Habsburg was thus only partially successful, but regret at this result is tempered by the reflection that liberation meant merely the gratification of the ambition of the Spanish queen. On the other hand, the acquisition of Lorraine was a solid gain for France, and the reproach of the critics that Fleury sacrificed France to Britain is, on the face of it, not very patently justified: on the contrary, there was a patriotic outcry in Britain that Walpole was sacrificing Britain to France. The fact is that Fleury's diplomacy, guided by Chauvelin, and favoured by the friendly neutrality of Britain,[2] achieved, at comparatively slight cost, a success which equalled the most brilliant feats of Louis XIV. It was not, however, to the credit of the jealous old man, who in this matter gave way too easily to the intrigues of Walpole, that Chauvelin paid for the efficacy of his ability and his energy with the loss of his office as keeper of the seals and foreign minister.[3]

The remaining four years of Fleury's administration was an incessant and ultimately unsuccessful attempt to stave off war. The clang of arms had not in fact ceased from troubling the repose of Europe, on the cessation of strife in Italy and on the Rhine. The

[1] Dumont, Sup., iii. October 1735. Lorraine came to France in 1766, on the death of Stanislaus.

[2] See Coxe's Walpole, ii. 284-396, for the part played by the British cabinet in these negotiations.

[3] Méms. de D'Argenson, i. 230-242.

emperor, eager to obtain in the East an indemnity for the loss of territory in Italy, joined the czarina in an attack on Turkey. The struggle was no sooner terminated by the mediation of Fleury (Peace of Belgrade, September 1739), than a naval war broke out between Great Britain and Spain over the illicit commerce maintained by British traders with the Spanish colonies. At the same time Genoa appealed for the armed intervention of France to suppress a revolt in Corsica, while the rebellious Corsicans invoked the protection of Louis XV. against their oppressors. Instead of accepting the offer of a new province, Fleury sent 10,000 men to enforce submission to the miserable tyranny of the Italian republic (1739-40). The appeal made by Spain almost at the same time, in its quarrel with Great Britain, was far more embarrassing, and Fleury, it must be admitted, was no longer, if ever he had been, the man to cope with embarrassing situations. It would have been much better for his reputation as a diplomatist, if he had resigned after the conclusion of the Treaty of Vienna. Henceforth he advanced steadily in his halting, maladroit course towards complete failure. The stress was too great for France to trust the helm of State to a frail and somewhat peevish cardinal on the limits of ninety. The excited state of British public feeling had forced the hand of Walpole, and made accommodation impossible, even to so pacific a statesman.[1] The fact of a secret agreement, concluded in 1733, between France and Spain for the purpose of eventual co-operation against Britain,[2] backed by the incontrollable militarism of the French court, drove Fleury out of his position of neutrality. France hoped by its co-operation to merit the privileges of the Assiento enjoyed by Great Britain.[3] Friction and hostility between the two courts were the result,[4] and Fleury, while assuring Walpole of his anxiety to substitute arbitration for force, was forced to send a French squadron to join the Spanish fleet. To render the situation still more desperate for the aged cardinal, the Emperor Charles VI. died in October 1740, within a fortnight after the signing of the order to despatch the French fleet into Spanish waters, and a still more critical question—that of the Pragmatic Sanction—raised the spectre of universal war in every cabinet of Europe. With the exception of Bavaria, the Pragmatic Sanction had received the guarantee of all the Powers, but the opportunity was too favourable for the realisation of conflicting ambitions for this piece of parchment to command adhesion to the most solemn en-

[1] Coxe's Walpole, iii. 1-123.
[2] See Lecky, History of England, i. 383, 384.
[3] Coxe's Walpole, iii. 103.
[4] *Ibid.*, iii. 146, 147.

gagements. As Prince Eugene said, 200,000 good soldiers were the best guarantee of the Austrian succession. His sagacious advice had been neglected. The accumulated reverses of the campaigns against the allies and the Turks had lowered the prestige of the imperial army, which at this critical conjuncture was entirely inadequate to cope with the forces of a hostile combination of the numerous rivals of Maria Theresa. These included the Electors of Bavaria and Saxony, and the Kings of Spain and Sardinia, who founded their claims on ties of blood or marriage. On such grounds Louis XV. and half the potentates of Europe, great and small, might have invented excuses for overturning the settlement of Charles VI. Frederick II. of Prussia, who had become king by the death of his father six months before, resorted to stronger arguments than those of genealogy for the spoliation of the heiress of the dead emperor. He simply marched his well-equipped army into Silesia and sliced off a portion of it for incorporation with Prussia, without asking anybody's leave. Fleury had no liking for the Pragmatic Sanction, which he had long refused to guarantee, but he was appalled at the prospect of a terrible international convulsion, and would have been content with the election of the Elector of Bavaria to the imperial dignity, and a modification of the Pragmatic Sanction to the extent of indemnifying the elector and the other claimants with a portion of the hereditary dominions of the late emperor. This policy of compromise was disconcerted by the firmness of Maria Theresa and the precipitate action of the young King of Prussia. Fleury's hand was further forced by Marshal Belleisle, the French plenipotentiary to the electoral diet at Frankfort, who used his opportunity to intrigue in favour of the dismemberment of the inheritance of Maria, and was sufficiently powerful, as the champion of the war party at the court of Versailles, to drag Fleury into an alliance with Frederick, whom the victory of Mollwitz (April 1741) had made master of Lower Silesia, on behalf of the elector. A policy of aggression and spoliation took the place of the policy of compromise, and the fact that Maria Theresa could only as yet count on the goodwill, instead of the active co-operation of Britain, seemed to promise its speedy triumph. Belleisle crossed the Rhine with one French army to cooperate with the elector in the conquest of Austria. Maillebois advanced with a second into Westphalia, to compel George II., who had hastened to Hanover, to sign a treaty of neutrality for his electorate, and the Elector of Saxony to espouse the cause of the allies. The cause of Maria seemed lost. Vienna was almost defenceless, and the Franco-Bavarian outposts were only a few leagues distant,

when a false move of the invaders saved the situation for the intrepid young queen, for whom the Hungarian nobility swore to die to a man. Instead of pushing on to Vienna, the Franco-Bavarian army swerved aside towards Prague and gave time to Maria to effect an accommodation with Frederick at the price of the cession of Lower Silesia (Secret Treaty of Klein Schnellendorf,[1] October 1741). The allies, reinforced by 20,000 Saxons, carried the capital of Bohemia on the night of the 25th November, and proclaimed the elector King of Bohemia, and, at Frankfurt shortly afterwards, emperor by the title of Charles VII. (January 1742). His triumph was short lived. The fall of Walpole in the following February,[2] and the advent of the bellicose Carteret as British foreign secretary, changed the goodwill of Britain into enthusiastic co-operation. A vote of a large subsidy to Maria and the despatch of an Anglo-Hanoverian force, under Lord Stair, to the Austrian Netherlands was the result of the change of ministry. Holland followed the example of Britain, and voted a subsidy to its old ally of the wars of Louis XIV. The neutrality of Frederick, who had again changed sides, in order to extort more Austrian territory, and won the victory of Czaslau over Prince Charles of Lorraine, was once more bought off with an additional slice of Silesia (Treaty of Berlin,[3] July 1742). This second defection was followed by that of the Elector of Saxony.

The fruit of these events was perceptible in the rapid rehabilitation of the cause of Maria, whose successes during the campaign of 1742 completely counteracted the reverses of that of 1741. The invaders were driven out of Upper Austria, Bavaria was invaded and ravaged in its turn, Bohemia reconquered, Prague invested. The trepidation of Fleury at this series of disasters was pitiable. "Peace at any price," he wrote to Belleisle, and this order was followed by a heart-broken epistle to Königsegg, the Austrian commander, in which the cardinal disowned responsibility for the war, and confessed that he had been forced by the pressure of Belleisle into an alliance "contrary to both his tastes and his principles" (July 1742). The publication of this letter by Maria exposed the unlucky writer to the ridicule of Europe, and poor Fleury's disclaimer deceived nobody. Maria refused to negotiate, and Belleisle was at last reduced to the necessity of secretly evacuating Prague, and leading the miserable remnant of his troops over roads blocked with snow and ice to Egra, and thence to the Rhine. In Italy, where the King of Sardinia threw over his old allies of the War of the Polish Succession (February 1742), the

[1] Carlyle's Frederick, iii. 477-483.
[2] Coxe's Walpole, iii. 223-248.
[3] Carlyle's Frederick, iii. 585, 586.

ill-success of the Spanish army, which was forced by the Austro-Sardinians to retreat into papal territory, was equally disconcerting.[1]

Fleury did not long outlive the accumulation of disasters accruing from the policy of spoliation, for which Belleisle was mainly responsible. He died at Issy on the 29th January 1743, after a ministry of seventeen years, leaving Europe ablaze with a war, comparable, in the extent of its devastating operations, to that of the Spanish Succession. In spite of his humiliating exodus from a melancholy situation, he deserves a larger meed of recognition than most of his critics have been inclined to allow him. His persistent opposition to bellicose devices was creditable to his humanity, and his desire to spare the people by the practice of economy. His moderation appeared to the bellicose spirits of the French court as a crime, and the War of the Polish Succession was the tribute which he was forced to pay to their influence. His compliance was at least rewarded with success, but the moderation of the man, combined with a tendency to vacillating measures, and the weight of his years, made it a risky thing to try the experiment a second time. Unfortunately, he was too old and feeble to resist the rashness of the hotspurs, who launched him a second time, in spite of himself, into war. His confession that he was forced into the struggle of the Austrian Succession was undoubtedly honest, if pusillanimous and injudicious in the circumstances. His hesitation might be the result of constitutional weakness, of vacillation and timidity, but there was only too good reason, in view of the effects of past wars, to make a thoughtful statesman pause on the brink of a great international conflict. In view both of the past and the present, the true interest of France lay in peace. A repetition of the exhaustion of the latter part of the reign of Louis XIV. would probably lead to the ruin of the monarchy, by rendering, as the sequel proved, revolution ultimately inevitable. Fleury did not, of course, foresee the revolution, but he did see that it would be risky to pursue the mad policy of a Louis XIV. a second time. His predilection for peace was, therefore, sound policy. The true centre of French activity lay in Canada and India—in peaceful commercial progress—not in Italy or Germany, in quixotic *bravoure*, in vast experiments of high policy, which in the sequel brought nothing but empty glory and oppressive taxation in their train. In one respect Fleury carried his pacific predilections too far. He neglected the navy,[2] and such neglect was a fatal error in a commercial and colonial Power like France. The War of the Austrian

[1] For these events see D'Argenson, iii. and iv.

[2] See St Simon, xv. 324.

Succession accordingly found France unprepared to cope with the naval strength of Great Britain, and this weakness, which his successors failed to repair, had to be atoned for by the further loss of its colonial empire, and the diminution of its maritime commerce.

His personal disinterestedness and his probity are exceptional in the annals of his own or of former times. He lived without ostentation; he died poor, and in this respect he is unique among the powerful ministers of France. He deserves a passing benediction as a plodding, well-meaning statesman, who, in spite of abuses which he was not enlightened or strong enough to eradicate, particularly the corruption and oppression of the fiscal hierarchy,[1] sought in his own routine way the welfare of the nation. "Fleury," judges the author of the "Memoirs of the Duke of Noailles," "governed, if not as an elevated genius, who executes great things, at least as a prudent man, who prefers the essential to the specious, who accommodates himself to conjunctures, who regards the public tranquillity as the foundation of public happiness, and who, by economy alone, heals evils which violent remedies are fitted to augment."[2] He left a gap behind, which it was very problematic whether Louis XV., who expressed the resolution to govern henceforth himself, was fitted to fill. "Now it is my turn to be prime minister,"[3] said he to his courtiers. The sequel was to show that power had passed from the cabinet to the harem. For the present Louis threw himself into his unwonted task with considerable zeal.[4] It was a testing occasion for his *début*. Europe was ablaze with war, and France was face to face with a coalition as formidable as that before which Louis XIV. stood at bay for twelve years. The British Government succeeded in cementing the old alliance of Britain, Holland, Austria, Sardinia, in defence of the Austrian Succession, which had shaped itself into prolonged cohesion over the question of the succession to the throne of Spain (Treaty of Worms, September 1743). The reply to this was the Treaty of Fontainebleau between France and Spain (October 1743). The crushing defeat of Dettingen, which George II. and Lord Stair, by a miracle of good luck rather than by virtue of any mastery of tactics, inflicted on Marshal Noailles,[5] proclaimed to Louis XV., as Blenheim had done to Louis XIV., that France would once more be hard put to it to hold its own against its numerous antagonists. The French were compelled to retreat across the Rhine, and Charles VII. found himself a penniless refugee, without credit or dominions, master

[1] Bailly, Hist. Financière, ii. 113, 114.
[2] Mémoires, iii. 195.
[3] D'Argenson, iv. 49.
[4] D'Argenson, iv. 50, 51.
[5] See Mémoires of Noailles, iii. 301-350.

of nothing but an empty title. The war had still five years to run, though France had no vital interest to champion by fighting a single skirmish more. It may be regarded as an appendix to Fleury's government, which went far to counteract all the good that his caution and economy had done France these seventeen years past, and to aggravate the evils which they had allowed to subsist. Louis had to go on, because, Maria being vindictive, and Frederick very restive and shifty, he could not well go back. Singularly enough, though Europe from Italy to Flanders was exposed to the shock of contending armies, neither Louis nor his antagonists had formally declared war. Nevertheless, of 120,000 Frenchmen who had penetrated Germany in 1741, 80,000 had perished or been made prisoners in the fruitless attempt to transfer the imperial dignity and part of the imperial inheritance to a petty elector. The waste of treasure had been as reckless as the waste of human life. This criminal folly was called maintaining the preponderance of France; in reality, it was the renewal of that suicidal policy of ruining the kingdom, which was to lead to sad results for both France and the monarchy in the long run. It was not till after three years' trial of these bloody and exhausting preliminaries, that Louis in the spring of 1744 fulminated a direct challenge to his Britannic Majesty, the Queen of Hungary, and the King of Sardinia.[1] He supplemented the Treaty of Fontainebleau by an agreement with the King of Prussia, who undertook to invade Bohemia, and with some of the German princes, who were to compel Maria to recognise Charles as emperor, and reinstate him in his dominions (Union of Frankfurt, May 1744). An invasion of Great Britain by Marshal Saxe, on behalf of the Pretender, which came to nothing in the meantime, was also on the programme of hostilities. This miscarried adventure was the prelude to a series of operations in Flanders, Alsace, Bohemia, and Italy in the summer of 1744, in which fortune was more evenly balanced between the belligerents. Louis himself led a well-equipped army across the frontier of the Austrian Netherlands in May, and had made some progress in reducing the frontier towns, when the news of the invasion of Alsace by Prince Charles of Lorraine compelled him to hurry with an army corps to the assistance of Marshal Coigni. An attack of fever, which for some days threatened his life, arrested his progress at Metz. The purpose of the march had been attained, however. Three days after Louis' arrival at Metz, Prince Charles was retiring precipitately from Alsace, marching his hardest to the relief of Bohemia, where Frederick was engaged at his old trick of lopping

[1] Isambert, xxii. 170-173 (March and April); D'Argenson, iv. 232, 233.

off Austrian territory for the benefit of Prussia, and at the same time in making a diversion in favour of his ally. Instead of pushing into Bavaria and co-operating with the Prussian king, Noailles and Coigni lingered on the Rhine and in Austrian Swabia, and allowed Prince Charles to roll back the Prussians into Silesia, and secure, in the deliverance of Bohemia, a recompense for the evacuation of Alsace. The campaign in Italy was similarly balanced by success and failure on both sides. The naval battle between a British and Franco-Spanish fleet off Toulon (22nd February) was indecisive, and though a Franco-Spanish army, under Don Philip and the Prince of Conti, penetrated Piedmont and laid siege to Coni, it was forced by the inclemency of the season and the lack of supplies to raise the siege, and recross the Piedmontese Alps. On the other hand, Prince Lobkovitz, who commanded the Austrians in the centre of the Italian peninsula and drove back the enemy towards the Neapolitan frontier, was, in his turn, driven out of Velletri by the King of Naples, and compelled to retreat to the Po.

The death of the Emperor Charles VII., in January 1745, afforded an opportunity for substituting diplomacy for the sword. The youth of the new elector precluded his candidature for the dignity of his father. The Elector of Saxony, whom the Marquis D'Argenson, Louis' minister of foreign affairs,[1] wished to support as the French candidate, preferred to accept a British subsidy, and to conclude an offensive alliance with Maria Theresa against the King of Prussia (Treaty of Warsaw,[2] May 1745). Louis might have acquiesced, for the sake of peace, in the election of Francis, Grand Duke of Tuscany, and husband of the Queen of Hungary, on condition of the cession of Silesia to Frederick, and Milan to Don Philip. Maria, though ready to negotiate, preferred war to terms so exacting, which Marshal Noailles in vain strove to moderate. D'Argenson, on the other hand, was actuated by the traditional antipathy to the House of Habsburg, and the determination to abase it,[3] while George II., with the prospect of reaping large advantages from the humiliation of France and Spain, was in no mood to sheathe the sword, and held staunchly by his ally. The firmness of the Queen of Hungary was at least consistent. She was only within her rights in refusing to accept anything less than the inheritance of her father, and in insisting on the acquisition of the imperial title for her husband. Louis' obligations to Frederick and the King of Spain rendered it

[1] D'Argenson, iv. 117 (nominated November 1744).
[2] Carlyle, iv. 88-90, and D'Argenson, iv. 243, 260.
[3] Mémoires de Noailles, iii. 394-399; D'Argenson, iv. 407.

difficult for him to resile from the demand of Silesia for Prussia and Lombardy for Spain, and it required three additional campaigns to induce in both sides the spirit of compromise. That of 1745 was so disastrous to George and Maria that it looked as if they had let their opportunity slip in refusing an accommodation. Bavaria was indeed invaded and conquered a second time by an Austrian army, and its young elector forced to renounce all claim to the inheritance of Charles VI., and to support the election of Maria's husband to the imperial crown (September 1745). The French army in Germany was a second time obliged to repass the Rhine and abandon all intervention in the affairs of the empire. These incipient successes were counterbalanced by the series of blows which Frederick, in spite of his isolation, inflicted on the Austrians in Silesia, and wrested from Maria the final cession of this province to her arch-enemy (Peace of Dresden, December 1745).[1] Equally unfortunate were the operations in the Austrian Netherlands, where Cumberland, Königsegg, and Waldeck hazarded and lost the battle of Fontenoy, and with it the greater part of Flanders, to Marshal Saxe. The conquest of Scotland and the invasion of England by Prince Charles Edward even threatened to snatch the British crown from the head of George II., and deal a fatal blow to his friends on the Continent, by checking the flow of British gold into their treasuries. In Italy, too, the advantage lay with the French and their Spanish allies, who overwhelmed the King of Sardinia at Bassignano and overran Lombardy. D'Argenson sought to tempt Charles Emmanuel, with the offer of this province, to throw up the Austrian alliance, and join in the crusade on behalf of the liberation of Italy, of which he was the enthusiastic champion.[2] The preliminaries of a treaty were signed at Turin on the 26th December, but the procrastination of the Spanish queen, and the advance of Austrian reinforcements, under Prince Lichtenstein, at the beginning of 1746, completely upset D'Argenson's grand scheme, and saved the wavering allegiance of Charles Emmanuel to his allies. Lichtenstein and Charles assumed the offensive with such effect that the conquerors of the previous year were driven out of Lombardy and Piedmont into Genoese territory, and across the Var into Provence as far as Toulon. The invaders were pushed back beyond the Var by Belleisle, and Genoa was ultimately reoccupied by the Duke of Richelieu, but with the fall of D'Argenson all thought of the liberation of Italy by the expulsion of the Austrians was abandoned.

[1] Carlyle, iv. 227, 228.

[2] See D'Argenson, iv. 266 *et seq.*, and Noailles, iv. 417-423.

In the Austrian Netherlands, where Marshal Saxe was pitted against Prince Charles of Lorraine, the operations of 1746 and 1747, in contrast to those of Italy, were an unbroken series of successes for the French. The victory of Raucoux (October 1746) brought the war to the borders of Holland, and the danger of an irruption, for which the Dutch were almost as unprepared as in 1672, inclined the States-General to open *pourparlers* for peace, which Louis had vainly offered after each fresh success. A congress of British, Dutch, and French plenipotentiaries accordingly met at Breda, but the negotiations broke down owing to the lack of earnest co-operation on the part of King George, and the uncompromising determination of Maria Theresa. In this emergency, as in 1672, the Dutch looked to the Prince of Orange, whom they appointed stadholder with full powers, to save them from a desperate situation. William IV., as stadholder and captain-general, was, however, no William III. The fortresses of Dutch Flanders were carried in a few weeks in the early summer of 1747, and Marshal Saxe added one more victory, at Lawfeld, to the long roll of French successes, in the attempt to invest Maastricht. Maastricht was the crux of the situation. "Peace," said the marshal, "lies in Maastricht." The allies exerted themselves to forestall this crowning disaster by concluding a treaty with the Czarina Elizabeth, who placed a contingent of 37,000 men at their service, in return for a British subsidy of £100,000. Before the arrival of the Russians on the Rhine, Marshal Saxe had, however, succeeded in drawing his lines round this last bulwark of Holland and the Grand Alliance, and George and Maria were at last compelled to curb their obstinacy and their resentment, and to give ear to Louis' reiterated overtures for peace. The exhaustion of all the belligerents expedited the task of accommodation, which was renewed at Aix-la-Chapelle, and which might have been effected five years before. The treaty of that name did not materially change the map of Europe in spite of the bloody and reckless conflict of eight years. The Queen of Hungary ultimately agreed to cede Parma to Don Philip, to indemnify the King of Sardinia with a small slice of Lombardy, and to abide by the cession of Silesia to Frederick, in return for the guarantee of the Pragmatic Sanction. Louis adopted a very philanthropic and gallant tone. He did not wish, said he, to negotiate as a merchant, but as a king, and therefore renounced his conquest of Belgium, and agreed once more to demolish the fortifications of Dunkirk, to guarantee the renewal of the commercial treaty with Britain, and to recognise Francis I. as emperor. King George, too, had not much to show for the

enormous waste of treasure which had vastly augmented the national debt. The exhaustion of France and Spain was doubtless a consoling reflection, as tending to ensure the maritime predominance of Britain, but the acquisition of Madras, in return for the cession of Louisburg, and the renewal of the right to carry the miserable natives of Africa as slaves to Spanish America, and send a trading ship annually thither, was a small return for such prolonged and expensive exertions. The only belligerent who could congratulate himself on the solid advantages accruing from his unscrupulousness and his ability was Frederick, the man who had instigated the war by an act of brigandage, and at its conclusion both retained his conquest, and remained master of the best drilled army in Europe. Judging by results, the historian is tempted to conclude that all the governments of Europe, with the exception perhaps of his majesty at Potsdam, who showed himself shrewd enough, had gone mad for eight years. It would indeed be difficult to believe in the sanity of these august potentates, were the history of Europe not a too frequent repetition of these fits of violent insanity. How the peoples could submit to be victimised in this fashion by a few selfish and jealous despots, and their servile agents in high places, is another mystery, equally astonishing. "The blood of man," says Burke, "should never be shed, but to redeem the blood of man. It is well shed for our family, for our friends, for our God, for our country, for our kind. The rest is vanity, the rest is crime." Admitting the latitude of this category, which, however, requires some explanation, how much of the reckless bloodshed of these eight years must be ranked as vanity and crime! Look at the condition of France, in particular, which gained not one iota of advantage from this long struggle, except the barren consciousness of military glory. France is, as usual, very miserable, though Te Deums have ascended to heaven in celebration of the feats of Marshal Saxe, and Voltaire has declared himself "mad with joy"[1] over Fontenoy. War had, of course, compelled the controller-general Orry, and after his dismissal, Machault, to have recourse to extraordinary expedients, such as the imposition of the tax of the tenth,[2] creation and sale of offices, augmentation of the *taille*, increase of duties on certain articles, creation of *rentes*, etc.[3] By these devices the controller-general had sucked large sums out of the taxpayer, and enabled the crew of corrupt or incapable commissariat and fiscal agents to enrich themselves, instead of feeding the

[1] See his letter to the Marquis D'Argenson, iv. 460.

[2] Isambert, xxii. 145, 146 (August 1741).

[3] *Ibid.*, xxii. 165 *et seq.*, and see Bailly, Hist. Financière, ii. 120-128.

armies in the field.[1] The ascendency of Madame de Pompadour had also to be paid for in profusions to the mistress and her creatures,[2] at which Fleury would have paled. If the misery and discontent of the people were not so extreme as during the War of the Spanish Succession, their lot was, nevertheless, wretched enough. "If," writes D'Argenson, in June 1748, "with so execrable an administration within and dilapidation everywhere rampant, the taxes continue as they are, as seems likely, it is to be feared that the people will no longer restrain its discontent at a war so costly, a peace so sterile, a calm so immersed in dissipation and misery."[3] War and hunger had again thinned the population of the fairest provinces.[4] Hundreds of thousands had been swept into the grave by the sword or by misery. Twelve hundred millions of livres had been added to the national debt, and the commercial progress of the previous quarter of a century seriously lamed for the time being. The exhaustion of France marks another milestone on the road to revolution. "Opinion," notes D'Argenson, "is making terrible headway in France, . . . and no one knows whither the blind confidence in the mistress, who decides everything, will bring us."[5] "The kingdom," he notes shortly after, "is in a slow fever, and the fever is aggravated day by day by the abuses which quietly undermine its strength. There is no crying abuse to strike the senses, perhaps; each minister who approaches the king gets his way, without the slightest contradiction from any one in regard to the matter in hand. This is accordingly a government of pure hazard; it is certainly not a monarchy. Exarchy or heptarchy would be a better name for it. There is no chief direction, no motive power, no reformation possible at the present time."[6] Louis XV. was evidently standing the test of sole responsibility very ill. D'Argenson, who thought well of him and hoped for great things, was changing his mind and almost giving up hope. Such comments are suggestive interludes between the Te Deums that momentarily drown the dirge of popular misery in the provinces. Very ominous too for the future, especially as the hallelujahs over Marshal Saxe's victories are followed by a universal shout of disgust over the terms of a barren peace. France had been winning victories, and had negotiated peace as if it had been suffering defeats. Louis XIV. had ruined it by his disasters; Louis XV. bade fair to ruin it by his successes. It was a fatal policy of rushing into gigantic wars on behalf of other people, without any great national interest to serve, and without any fruits from successful battles. "Is it for this that

[1] See D'Argenson, iv. 224. [2] *Ibid.*, iv. 229, 230. [3] *Ibid.*, iv. 230.
[4] *Ibid.*, iv. 242; cf. 267. [5] *Ibid.*, iv. 268. [6] *Ibid.*, iv. 301.

we have made so many conquests?" cried the indignant critics, of whom the Marquis D'Argenson, who is certainly no arm-chair quibbler, but an ex-minister of no mean ability, is the chief. "The French," he adds, "desired peace, and their miseries tended to excite this desire. Under every other government less absolute, public opinion would have led to revolt, but the Frenchman loves glory and honour, and bore his misery with endurance. After the great moments of joy at the conclusion of peace, everybody is thunderstruck at the mediocrity of its conditions. Whilst in London and the principal towns of the three Britannic kingdoms the people are celebrating its conclusion with extravagant rejoicings, at Paris and in the provinces every one is in a state of consternation."[1]

The condition of France's ally, Spain, was even more lamentable. "Our misery and suffering cannot become worse," is the consoling reflection of one of its diplomatic agents. And if such was the condition of lands only indirectly affected by the war, what must have been the misery of those exposed to the devastations of actual operations, of Italy, Bavaria, Silesia, Flanders? And the most melancholy feature of the situation was that the peace was only a truce, which bore in it the germs of future miseries far more terrible to France and Europe. The resentments of Maria, the ill-assorting rivalries of France and Britain, which were merely checked, not eradicated at Aix-la-Chapelle, augured another and an all too speedy eruption of personal and national animosities. And what if there should be not even barren victories, but unmitigated disaster year after year, to the number of seven in all, to throw as a sop to an angry nation? No wonder that D'Argenson frowns in his enforced leisure, and continues his journal in Jeremias mood.

SOURCES OF THIS CHAPTER.—Isambert, Recueil Général, xxi. and xxii.; Mémoires de St Simon, Duclos, Villars, Noailles; Journal de D'Argenson; Journal de Barbier; Jobez, La France sous Louis XV.; Dumont, Corps Diplomatique, viii., and Supplement, iii.; Voltaire, Siècle de Louis XV.; Lacretelle, Histoire de France pendant le 18ième. Siècle; Bailly, Histoire Financière; Voltaire, Histoire du Parlement; Martin, Histoire de France, xv.; Vie Privée de Louis XV.; Louis Blanc, Histoire de la Révolution Française, i.; Coxe's Walpole; Lecky, History of England, vol. i.; Carlyle, History of Frederick the Great.

[1] D'Argenson, iv. 227.

## CHAPTER XX.

### Louis XV. and his Mistresses—Madame de Pompadour and the Government of the Sultana (1735-1756).

THE private life of kings is an object of keen curiosity to a certain class of people. To the *habitués* of a court, especially the court of France in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it is the grand pre-occupation of existence. Open the tomes of the autobiographers who played any part in the society of their time, and you will find them replete with the minutiæ of the diurnal life of the king. Of this sort of gossiping historiographer-royal, minus the title, Dangeau, who wrote down every night for fifty years the details of the court life of Louis XIV., is the chief. He is dry indeed, but he is very minute, a very sundial which throws the shadow of even the most trifling events at court, without substance. Torcy, Villars, Noailles, St Simon, Duclos, D'Argenson, Barbier are certainly more than mere chroniclers of court gossip. St Simon is, as I have already remarked, even a great historian. Torcy is an exact and conscientious exponent of diplomatic negotiations. Villars and Noailles are indispensable for the military history of the time. Duclos, D'Argenson, and Barbier are acute observers of men and things. Nevertheless, with the exception of Torcy, who inflexibly keeps to his text, one is constantly reminded of the fact that the grand question of the hour for every one who wishes to play a *rôle* is the question, "What happened at Versailles yesterday, and what is going to happen to-day or to-morrow?" Life for most people of quality, or the ambition of quality, is merely the art of being at court, for to be at court is the indispensable condition of being anything and getting anything. Their memoirs are, therefore, more or less a record of intrigue and speculation—intrigue against or for a mistress, a minister, a cardinal, an anybody in any sort of influential office, even a *valet de chambre*, like Bachelier,[1] who has the ear of his master the king, and with whom even a Fleury has to reckon—speculations as to the meaning of

[1] See D'Argenson, ii. 1.

this or that word, or look of his majesty at his *levée* in the morning, or his *couché* in the evening, with a view to taking one's cue accordingly, and courting betimes the coming man, or his mistress, or his confessor, or his valet. Thus a single sound from the royal lips is sufficient to send a tremor of fear, a thrill of hope through the whole complicated organisation of the court. It is destiny for every anxious courtier; unfortunately, too, it sometimes means destiny for France, even for Europe as well. And thus the garrulous autobiographers spin out their monotonous webs of intrigue and speculation, interspersed with highly coloured patches of scandal, into lengths of three, six, ten, and even twenty volumes. The art of government is for most people interested in politics the art of intrigue and speculation. If a man has political principles, theories of the commonweal, like a Fénélon, a St Simon, a D'Argenson, he has no chance at Versailles. It is the day of the *petit maître*, the masterkin in politics, as D'Argenson contemptuously calls the small politicians to whom Louis XV., after the exhaustion of the first burst of industry, supervening the death of the cardinal, gives over the task of government. His laziness and his growing sensuality are the postern doors of intriguing mediocrity to office and influence, whilst St Simon is unable to pay his grocer and his tailor, and has long disappeared into penurious obscurity, and D'Argenson is as hard up as a man with far more ideas in his head than louis d'ors in his purse can well be. "Everything is got nowadays," he soliloquises bitterly, "by recommendation; it is sufficient to instruct oneself in the duties of an office the moment one has got it. Zeal and application are at a discount."[1] D'Argenson's ideal of a reign is the reign of Henry IV., compared with which the *belle fatuité*, "fine fatuity," of Louis XIV. is mere stage demonstration, and the *régime* of Louis XV. is the climax of small things.[2] "Kingdoms will perish," he adds gloomily, "when fools only have the direction of the administration. Here in the France of to-day everything is for the fools. Thus the younger generation is trained only in foolery, . . . and from the fools they are already, they will soon become knaves and lose from view all principle."[3]

Small wonder, therefore, that the autobiographers are so largely absorbed with the doings of the *petits maîtres*, the mannikins of the court who rule the country. Cardinal Fleury himself is but a *petit maître* in many things. Little wonder too, that, society being corrupt as well as small, their books are replete with the scandalous tittle-tattle of the hour. It is melancholy how much of the memoirs

[1] See Journal, ii. 370. [2] *Ibid.*, ii. 286, 362. [3] *Ibid.*, ii. 37(

even of men like D'Argenson, who is no *petit maître*, but a man o large views, is given over to foul stories. The harlot is ever i evidence, for it is an age of harlots, as well as *petit maîtres*, at cour and elsewhere. Even Louis XV. bids fair to vie with the regen and M. the Duke as a voluptuary, as patron and paramour of shame less women. Vice accordingly bulks largely in the memoirs of hi reign. Politics, religion, harlotry are served up in the same disl with evident relish, both to the cook and his patrons. It is melan choly, but it is a fact. The sense of decency has largely disappeare from this kind of literature. Brantôme has come to life again. Th advent of a new beauty at court sets all the tongues a-chatterin downright indecency. And what society talks, the pen does no scruple to perpetuate. Will she succeed, or will she not, in he meretricious arts? is the grand question in the palace, in the salons in the clubs, in the street. Has his majesty got such and such shameless hussy with child or has he not? is another of thes absorbing questions. Which of the sisters De Nesle is at this momen uppermost in his majesty's heart and oftenest in his majesty's arms is another equally edifying. We might imagine ourselves in th tap-room of some low club. Do not deceive yourself, reader. We are moving in the very *élite* of French society in the eighteenth century, with a marquis to introduce us. Nay, there is even a duke to perform the function for us—the Duke of Richelieu, who is also an autobiographer, and one of the most unblushing rakes that ever wielded a pen. There is also Madame du Hausset, *femme de chambre* to Madame de Pompadour, whose memoirs, like those of the duke, are simply the history of a brothel. Do not be shocked; the truth must be told—the brothel is Versailles. Dangeau is dry, but he is decent. He reflects the hypocritical decorum of the latter-day court of Louis XIV. St Simon has plenty of gallant adventures but St Simon has no relish for this sort of thing, and condemns the moral depravity which he depicts. With the chronicles of th regency and the reign of Louis XV. decency takes flight. The Duke of Richelieu and Madame du Hausset, D'Argenson even, though D'Argenson improves somewhat as he grows older, hold up th mirror to vice with a revolting crassness.

The serious historian would fain ignore this unsavoury matter would fain leave it to Alexandre Dumas or M. Zola. He canno help himself, however, for he cannot avoid touching on the scandal and vices of the time. They were too much bound up with th decadence of the old *régime* to allow them the benefit of bein ignored, which were otherwise the best way to show one's contemp

for them and their heroes. In spite of himself, he must needs touch on matters whose details would disgrace the pages of the licentious novel-writer. It is no new feature in the history of the French monarchy, but, so far, we have merely glanced at the amours of these French kings *en passant*. Those of Louis XV. had such far-reaching social and political effects that they must be intruded even into serious history. Let this fact, and not the attractiveness of the subject, be our excuse for stirring the fœtid pool of the sensualities of so abandoned a soul as Louis XV. became.

Strange fact though it be, the youth of a prince could hardly be purer than that of the man who became one of the most abandoned of potentates. Louis XV. only became a libertine after he had been for ten years a husband and the father of a goodly family. Up to the age of twenty-five he was remarkable for a marked timidity and reserve towards the fair sex. He is said to have shed tears on the arrival of his *fiancée*, the Infanta, who was but a child of six, at the prospect of having to sleep in the same chamber. No one seemed less fitted by nature or training to play the Don Juan. The pupil of Fleury gave promise of becoming a second Louis XIII., as far as the punctilious performance of religious exercises and respect for the domestic virtues were concerned. Though he subsequently threw off his reserve, and with it all self-restraint, he never shook off the mechanical religiosity engrained in him by Fleury. Even in the *Parc aux Cerfs* he would still say the prayers that once had been the expression of innocence and piety. The fear of hell followed him thither, and he believed in the devil, nay, shook at the thought of him, in spite of Madame de Mailly's assurance that it was all an old wife's fable.[1] He is said, indeed, to have been addicted, at one period of his boyhood, to a revolting vice. If the assertion rested on no better authority than that of the Duke of Richelieu, it would be entitled to no more respect or credence than the gossip of low company in high places. It derives some colour of veracity from so respectable an autobiographer as Marshal Villars. According to the marshal, the young Duke of Tremouille was removed from court on the suspicion of favouring and sharing the vices of the young king and his companions. His removal appears to have checked this corrupting influence, and the marshal adds the assurance that Louis was at this period entirely impervious to the meretricious devices of court beauties.[2]

The metamorphosis of this reserved and virtuous young man into a prodigy of vice is so singular a fact, a fact, too, so fatal to the

[1] D'Argenson, ii. 373, 374. [2] Mémoires, iv. 293, 294.

monarchy, that one is naturally led to inquire how it came about. Nature had unhappily denied him that activity and fertility of mind which find their satisfaction in intellectual tastes and in the pleasures of work. His education had not tended to make up for this defect. The delicacy of his constitution as a child, and his frequent illnesses afforded Fleury a pretext for humouring his distaste for study, and for encouraging that dependence on himself which, while it repressed the mental vigour of his pupil, ensured his own ultimate supremacy. He did not teach him to acquire the habit of work. All exertion which did not appear in the light of a pastime was irksome to him. Consequently he grew up with an invincible aversion to the duties of his exalted position. The only strong interest of his mind lay in his prayer-book and in the ceremonies of religion. He was fond of talking to some prelate or abbé about the liturgy, and had some interest in natural history, astronomy, and botany. Beyond this his mind was a blank.[1] He had the passion of the Bourbons for the chase, and his ardour for this healthy exercise contributed to render his delicate constitution robust. He had a fancy for cookery, for turning snuff-boxes on the lathe, which he distributed as New Year's presents to his friends, and later for weaving tapestry.[2] Such trifling pursuits may conduce with great intellectual power, but when they are the only absorbing occupations of a king, they denote mental vacuity. They did not keep him from *ennui* and melancholy, and this *ennui* was a dangerous state of mind for an absolute king, as well as for a common mortal. Should the animal instinct at last gain ascendency over natural reserve and mechanical habits, Louis XV., it is evident, would find no resource in himself against its seductive powers. He must fall an easy victim from pure impotence to counteract his desires. Mere shyness, or even the fear of the devil, is no adequate substitute for force of character. Louis XV. had only to break the spell of his timidity and superstition in order to discover his real self, and become its helpless slave.

When he had grown to full manhood, on the verge of thirty, that is, he showed no disposition to break away from his own small personality, except in one fatal direction—that of pure animality. D'Argenson at this period praises his good sense, his discretion, his power of dissimulation (as needful in a king), his instinctive knowledge of men. On the other hand, he still dislikes exertion, is the slave of habit, shows at times a strange insensibility, manifests, too, a strange joy at the death of other people, though he has a mortal fear of death himself, loves to decide after the manner of Louis XIV.,

[1] See Vie Privée, ii. 49, 50. [2] D'Argenson, iii. 258.

but often decides wrong from lack of reflection and experience, is decidedly resentful and petty in his dislikes. His lethargy and nullity threaten to increase instead of diminishing with his responsibilities.[1] Evidently not a strong man, by no means a man of resource.

His marriage with Maria Lesczinski was not fitted to make a better man of him. Maria owed the good fortune that made her Queen of France to Madame de Prie. She had been tacitly betrothed to Count d'Estrées, colonel of one of the French regiments in garrison at Weissenburg, where the exiled King of Poland lived as the pensioner of Louis XV. One day Stanislas received the astounding news of the offer of Louis' hand for his daughter. "Let us thank God," he burst out, on entering her apartment. "Have you been recalled to the throne of Poland, father?" asked Maria. "Heaven is even more generous," was the reply; "you are Queen of France." The astonishment of Louis at the announcement of his betrothal to this obscure girl was probably not less than that of the bewildered girl herself, who became a queen to the order of Madame de Prie. He was precipitately married by proxy at Strasburg on the 14th August 1725 to a woman seven years older than himself, whom he had never seen, perhaps never heard mentioned before, and who, three weeks later, was crowned as his queen at Fontainebleau. To become a husband in such a haphazard fashion is a very questionable experiment in any case, and in this case it was not a successful one. The queen was very pious, unaffected, good-natured. She grew to love her husband, even passionately love him,[2] for her husband, besides being a king, was the most handsome youth in France. Had his passionate feeling been paired with an ordinary degree of wisdom, it might have been the means of inspiring such mutual attachment as might accrue from the necessity of companionship to a man who was a burden to himself. Unfortunately the queen was not wise. Her intellect was of the smallest. "Nobody in this world with less *esprit*," judges D'Argenson.[3] She had not even common-sense. She acted towards her husband as she saw other women about her acting towards theirs. She played the disdainful in company, "this being in France," according to D'Argenson, "the proper air to put on toward's one's husband." The worst possible tactics, certainly, to adopt towards a timid man, who was painfully sensitive to raillery of this kind. After marriage, Louis showed an inclination to spend his evenings in the queen's apartments, chatting and playing cards.

[1] D'Argenson, ii. 1, 284, iii. 123-125, iv. 52.
[2] Mémoires de Villars, v. 29. [3] Mémoires, iii. 192.

Instead of cultivating this inclination, his wife, by her pouting airs, only made herself disagreeable and her husband miserable. The effect was to relegate him to the society of his male companions. Her nocturnal habits, as to which D'Argenson[1] has some queer details, not in the best of taste, were equally repellent, and frequently drove the king to seek the privacy of his own chamber. Nor were the relations of the dull husband and the stupid wife improved by the tactics of Fleury, whose interest it was to check any attempt to gain an ascendency that might subvert his own. The cardinal, moreover, bore the queen a grudge for her complicity in the tactics of Madame de Prie against himself. It was Fleury who had dictated the categoric note which showed Maria that he was determined to brook no rival. "I beg you, Madame, and, if necessary, I order you, to do all that the Bishop of Fréjus shall tell you from me as if he was myself." The Bishop of Fréjus did not rely on mere written orders. The queen being very devout, he skilfully manœuvred, through her Jésuit confessor, to counteract the influence of feminine arts over the mind and heart of his master. At a hint from him the confessor read her majesty frequent homilies on the sinfulness of feminine coquetry, and on the religious duty of restraining the expression of the feelings in married intercourse. These lessons were so effective that the cardinal soon ceased to fear the rivalry of his poor dupe. Before long Louis became a mechanical husband, and the queen had only too good reason to complain of his coldness. During a serious illness, which prostrated her in 1726, he was so callous and so frightened at contagion that he did not visit her for the first four days, though the fever caused serious misgivings for her life, and when he at length ventured to inquire personally, the visit only lasted a few minutes. According to Villars,[2] whom the poor queen made her confidant, there were unpleasant scenes and many tears, which were wasted on a man who was both dull of comprehension and egotistic in sentiment.

If the queen failed to arouse the sensibility of her husband, there were others who, for base ends, attempted the task with more success. To the libertines of the school of the regency a virtuous king was a thorn in the flesh. A court without a mistress gave less scope for ambitious place-hunters and the eager votaries of dissipation. Louis must, therefore, at all hazards, have a mistress. All the gallants of the day, with the Duke of Richelieu at their head, have sworn it, and

[1] See Mémoires, iii. 192, 193. The description is too shocking to bear repetition.

[2] See Mémoires, v. 2, 3, and 29.

there were plenty of aspiring beauties among the facile duchesses and countesses of the court to aid in their conspiracy. There was, for instance, Mademoiselle de Charolais, the witty, lovely, and not over-scrupulous sister of M. the Duke, who understood the art of amusing the king far better than the queen. M. de Richelieu regarded it as a hopeful sign when Mademoiselle and the Countess of Toulouse succeeded in inspiring Louis with a taste for the sprightly parties at Rambouillet. Thither they gradually accustomed him to retire in order to escape from the tedium of himself. There, he learned to forget *ennui* in the ardour of the chase, in the sunshine of the sallies of his vivacious cousin. There, sleighing parties, supper parties, dancing parties, were the preliminary steps in the process of "awakening," "indoctrinating," the king, as Richelieu and his brother rakes expressed it. His growing taste for the pleasures of the table was a still more helpful adjunct. He became fond of wine and play, and on one occasion had the hardihood to venture into the queen's bed-chamber in a state of intoxication. He got such a reception that he swore he would not subject himself to a repetition of so well-merited a rebuff.[1] Great news for Mephistopheles Richelieu, while to Villars these gay parties at Rambouillet, of which the queen was not a member, were of ill omen. "These sleighing parties," he wrote in January 1729, "have afforded the ladies some reason to hope for a little more vivacity on the part of the king towards them. There was dancing after supper, and if that takes place often, it is not impossible that some beauty may have the courage to lay hands on the king."[2] Louis, however, maintained his allegiance to habit for some years after his marriage, in spite of the artifices of the conspirators, masculine and feminine, and Villars is found testifying repeatedly to the continence of his life during this period.[3] When the charms of some lady were vaunted in his presence, he would curtly respond, "I think the queen still more beautiful."[4] His corruptors had to reckon, too, with the influence of Cardinal Fleury, and Fleury's influence was sufficient for a time to supplement that of Louis' natural reserve. The cardinal was not the man, however, to adhere too rigidly to the laws of morality, if force of circumstances suggested the expediency of compromise. The signs of an "awakening" became at last so unmistakable that Fleury was forced to make a virtue of necessity. His chief anxiety was to preclude the political ascendency of whoever should score the first triumph. The autobiographers declare that he had, from reasons of policy, a hand in

[1] Vie Privée, ii. 29.
[2] Mémoires, v. 158.
[3] Mémoires, v. 99; cf. 106.
[4] Vie Privée, ii. 28.

the intrigue that resulted in the success of Madame de Mailly, the eldest of the five sisters De Nesle, who acquired notoriety as the direct instrument of the king's moral declension. Madame de Mailly was no beauty, but she was graceful and insinuating, and made every advance calculated to disarm the hesitation of the royal novice. She had fallen in love with Louis for his own sake, and was as disinterested as it is possible for a woman of small fortune, who cultivates an illicit passion, to be. She would cost little, she would not meddle with politics, and therefore the cardinal could afford to be compliant. Madame de Mailly was permitted an opportunity to assert herself, and the insinuating arts of the prostitute with which she appealed to the passions, if not to the heart, of the young king earned her an easy victory.[1] At first Louis, with the parsimony and reserve natural to him, was both economic and secret in his amours. "One may say of the king as of the czar," remarks D'Argenson, "that he makes love like a porter and pays in the same character."[2] Madame de Mailly was kept so poor that she could hardly dress decently at times, and her *femme de chambre* was quite shabby in her attire.[3] The queen was kept in ignorance of the intrigue, and her husband had been for several years the paramour of her lady of the palace before the scandal became public. He was still hypocritically decorous and religious, in spite of the efforts of the *esprits forts* to make him a sceptic as well as a libertine, and though he refrained from communicating at Easter, "for fear of getting into trouble with God," "he mumbled his prayers and paternosters in church with his habitual decency."[4] When the mistress was publicly recognised, and the queen was forced to acquiesce in the humiliation of retaining the courtesan as her lady-in-waiting, there was, of course, some scandal, even in that crapulous society, and Fleury ventured to remonstrate. He found his master beyond the stage of tutelage in such matters. "I have conferred on you the charge of my affairs, not of my person," replied the king curtly.[5] Fleury's remonstrances ceased, but he was resolved that if morality must be sacrificed, politics should not share the same fate, as long as his own power, at least, was in question. "Sire, I have only one favour to ask your majesty before I die" (this was in 1739, and he did not—D'Argenson would say, *would* not—die for other four years yet), "and it is to remember what I have often told you in your youth, that if ever your majesty hearkens to the counsels of these women in political affairs, you and

[1] D'Argenson, i. 220, 221; Vie Privée, ii. 29-32.
[2] *Ibid.*, ii. 229. [3] *Ibid.*, ii. 211. [4] *Ibid.*, iii. 161.
[5] Lacretelle, Hist. de France, ii. 184

your kingdom will be lost without resource."[1] On another occasion he found the memoirs of Sully on the king's table, and turning over the leaves, read to him the outburst of Henry IV. to Gabrielle, "I could find in my kingdom two hundred hussies as beautiful as you, but I could not find two men like Sully. Be assured of this, therefore, between you and Sully, I shall always vote for Sully."[2] Louis was, for the moment, more amenable to the cardinal's lectures on this point. "If ever a woman dare to talk to me of political affairs," he exclaimed one evening at supper, in the presence of Madame de Mailly and Mademoiselle de Charolais, "I shall shut my door in her face."[3] Unfortunately, he was all too soon to belie his words. The spell once broken, his amorous proclivities swept him beyond the bounds both of decency and prudence. Madame de Mailly had the imprudence to induce her paramour to invite her second sister to Versailles in the hope of retaining, with her assistance, her hold over a man whom it was a hard task to divert. Mademoiselle de Nesle was not content with this subordinate *rôle*. She brought with her from the convent in which she had been educated no trace of moral delicacy. She coveted her sister's place, and she succeeded in securing it. Her gaiety, youth, and *naïveté* gave a fresh charm to the supper parties in the *petits appartements* at Versailles. The *pro forma* wife of a Count de Vintimille,[4] she supplanted her sister, under this title, as mistress in 1739. Madame de Mailly had not the moral strength to renounce the prize, though she had lost her supremacy, and Louis had not the decency or self-control to deliver himself from his first entanglement on giving himself up to a second. Mephistopheles Richelieu had succeeded beyond his most sanguine expectations at this stage of his theory of "indoctrination." There came indeed a fit of reflection and devotion on the sudden death of Madame de Vintimille, after giving birth to a son, whom her husband disowned, and whom Louis, with too good reason, accounted his own—the "half Louis" (half sovereign) as the wits of the court dubbed him. The fear of hell exercised a sort of spell for a couple of months over the imagination, if not over the conscience of the superstitious libertine, though there was a third sister, the Duchess of Lauragais,[5] on whom he had turned his lorgnette, flitting suspiciously about his sorrowful, devout person and ready to assuage his grief by taking the dead one's place. If all tales be true, sister number three had her turn before as well as after the death of sister number two. Be this as it may, Louis played the devotee for a

[1] D'Argenson, iii. 265. [2] *Ibid.*, iii. 363. [3] *Ibid.*, iii. 265.
[4] *Ibid.*, iii. 386. [5] *Ibid.*, iii. 397.

short interval, and D'Argenson speculated on the possibility of Madame de Mailly becoming a second Madame de Maintenon, and a possible conversion of her paramour. Madame went every morning to hear a mass said on the tomb of her lamented sister. "It is to be feared," reflects D'Argenson, "lest the king turn to repeating his breviary with Madame de Mailly. . . . In the inner circle of the palace all the talk is of spirituality and devotion."[1] Madame's star was again in the ascendant, and Louis took to reminding elderly people how soon death might overtake them. He would at the most be a platonic lover henceforth, as M. the Duke had become in regard to Madame D'Egmont.[2] The supper parties in the *petits appartements* were stopped accordingly, or at any rate reduced to small dimensions, and presided over with economy and decorum by the rehabilitated sultana. Richelieu had serious misgivings for the consequences of this fit of "spirituality and devotion." His trepidation was premature. A few weeks of it, and the royal lorgnette was once more being turned crapulously towards the fair forms that, in spite of Madame de Mailly, would flash into the royal speculum. Once more her place was undermined by a successful rival, and that rival another sister, the fourth of the series, the widowed Madame de la Tournelle, a superb beauty this one, and strong besides in the support of Richelieu, Cardinal Tencin, and Paris Duverney. Madame de la Tournelle knew how to whet the passion which her fine person had inspired, by appearing to defer surrender. She would only yield on her own conditions. She would be sole and absolute mistress with a suitable title and a fitting establishment. Louis must pay in money as well as in due submission. And pay he did, sending Madame de Mailly abruptly about her business[3] in the harshest fashion, and creating her imperious rival Duchess of Chateauroux.

The new sultana was a woman of too strong a character to be merely the magnet of the serail, to be satisfied to be the plaything of the *petits appartements*. She would meddle in politics, despite Fleury, and what is more remarkable, she imparted to the king the stimulus of her own spirit. For a short period he was a wonder to himself as well as to his environment, and on the death of Fleury, which supervened shortly after the advent of the duchess, D'Argenson, Noailles, and other men of parts were in high hopes that the days of the *roi fainéant* were past. Hope alternated with misgiving, it is true, but the active attitude of the king bade fair to make the surprise permanent. "The king works hard," notes D'Argenson with satis-

[1] D'Argenson, iii. 405-423. [2] *Ibid.*, iii. 423, 424. [3] *Ibid.*, iv. 36 *et seq.*

faction in February 1743, "and takes his art to heart; it does not appear as if the ministers govern him, though it is whispered that this is coming."[1] A very different strain this from that of eighteen months before. "In public people mention the cardinal with some measure of affection," wrote he in November 1741. "Of the king they speak only with contempt, and place him even below the sham kings."[2] He actually undertook the task of being his own foreign minister for a few months after the dismissal of the feeble Amelot, with the assistance of Noailles and Chavigny, until the restoration of the office for the Marquis D'Argenson in November 1744. He braced himself to the resolution to command in person the army in Flanders, and the merit of this inspiration is to be ascribed to Madame de Chateauroux as well as to the Duke of Noailles and the Count D'Argenson, minister for war.[3] To inspire a monarch, who was fond of amusing himself with making tapestry and cooking choice ragouts, with a taste for the dangers and fatigues of a campaign, was no small feat, and no small evidence of great force of character in the woman who might easily have retained him under the spell of her charms. The danger of invasion, to which France was exposed after the disaster of Dettingen, added force to the representations of the duchess and her abbettors. In the face of reverses, which threatened the safety of France, the spirit of Henry IV. and Louis XIV. seemed to awaken in their degenerate successor. "I can assure you," wrote Louis to Marshal Noailles on the 24th July 1743, "that I have an extreme desire to learn by experience an art which my fathers have so well practised, and which, till now, has not afforded me success at second hand."[4] "The resolution which you have taken to conduct the war personally," responded the marshal, "has become indispensable in every respect. It is the only means of saving the State in danger. The personal honour of your majesty is at stake. A king is never so great as at the head of his armies. It is there that his subjects love to see him, and it is there also that he is most respectable, especially when the question is one of the defence of the State and its frontiers"[5] "I confess," returned Louis, "that I could not witness with *sangfroid* the fall of one of our fortresses, and the devastation of our frontiers."[6] Such sentiments are very honourable to the promptings of Madame de Chateauroux, and after a year's coaxings Louis did actually put in practice his resolution to play the hero. Unfortunately the impor-

[1] Mémoires, iv. 50.
[2] *Ibid.*, iii. 421.
[3] Mémoires de Noailles, iii. 332-340.
[4] Noailles, iii. 333.
[5] *Ibid.*, iii. 334.
[6] *Ibid.*, iii. 336.

tunity of the mistress in dogging the hero's steps contributed to invest his heroism with no small ridicule, and to deprive it of moral grandeur. Louis was a hero in leading strings, and Madame, by her effrontery in sharing his triumphs, must needs blazon the fact before the world. Could she and her sister, the Duchess of Lauragais, or Madame de Flavacourt, not follow the king, if not to the camp, at least to some place in the neighbourhood? she insinuatingly asks Noailles. "I cannot help telling you," bluntly answered the marshal, "that both the king and yourself would require some plausible reason to justify such a step in the eyes of the public." Louis must, therefore, undergo the sacrifice of setting out alone for the army. Madame de Chateauroux and her sister appeared resignedly at the opera, while Louis was earning the acclamations of the soldiers and the plaudits of the people for his heroic devotion to duty. The nation was intoxicated with admiration. It had suddenly discovered in its king the descendant of Henry IV., who rides well at least, and is handsome and dignified on parade. "Long live the king," is the universal cry. Menin falls before him in the beginning of June (1744), and Paris celebrates the event with effusive fireworks and Te Deums worthy of the conqueror. There is a fascination in thus playing the hero, which tends to bewilder the king with himself. Am I a hero then? Is this myself, or some adventitious person? Alas for the fireworks and the Te Deums, the nascent hero soon lost the exalted consciousness of self-sacrifice and heroic persistence in his new *rôle*. In a few weeks he felt bored in camp, as he had felt bored at court, without his tapestry, his ragouts, and his women, and finally stole off to give Madame, who had slipped away overnight from Versailles, a rendezvous at Lille. Henceforth Madame set decorum and heroism at defiance, and dodged about from place to place in the wake of her lover, who trotted between his mistress and his army with an assiduity that brought down on him the indignation of the people and the gibes of the soldiers.[1]

The news of the invasion of Alsace suddenly put an end to this piece of low comedy, and hurried the hero in leading strings away to Metz to the rescue. Madame spiritedly kept up the chase, and took up her quarters in the Abbey of St. Arnauld, which Louis ordered to be connected with his own residence by a wooden gallery. Four streets were barricaded whilst the operation was being carried out, on the pretext of the king's convenience in hearing mass. And he was indeed soon in grim need of a mass. A violent fever, induced

[1] D'Argenson, iv. 103, 104.

by the fatigue of the march and his intemperate habits, declared itself on the 4th August, and threatened his life. Richelieu, apprehensive of a recurrence of the fear of hell, exerted himself to allay the alarm excited by the anxiety of the doctors. He browbeat the nervous physicians and the snivelling courtiers into composure, and shut out the priests from the sick chamber. One priest would not be shut out, however,—Fitz-James, Bishop of Soissons, and royal chaplain, who told the king the worst in plain language, and refused to give him the *viaticum* unless he renounced his concubine. Louis trembled at this plain speaking, and in spite of Richelieu's serenity, the fear of hell took possession of him. After receiving extreme unction, he empowered the bishop to announce to the courtiers present his repentance for the scandal of his life, deprived Madame de Chateauroux of her court appointments, and ordered her and her sister to leave Metz forthwith and not come within fifty leagues of the court for the future. The fallen favourite was abandoned to the insults and outrages of the people. A post-chaise was refused her, and she had to thank the friendship of Richelieu for the loan of a conveyance to carry her from the place she had entered as virtual queen. She was forced to avoid the main roads and reconnoitre every village on the way, before venturing to pass through it. Her penitent lover, on the other hand, was the object of the national grief and tenderness.[1] The people saw in its sick monarch a victim to duty, and ignored the cowardly repentance which had worked a miracle of grace at the eleventh hour. The monarchic instinct was still very strong in France. The people might jeer at the death of an unpopular king, but there was still a certain degree of respect and affection for a living one, who had earned the reputation of a martyr to duty. The churches were thronged with grief-stricken worshippers praying for his recovery. All France waited with the most consuming anxiety for the day of crisis. Never had monarch a stronger hold on the imagination and the heart of a nation than had Louis XV. during these anxious days. A curious position for one of the most prosaic of mortals to find himself in. The people saw in Madame de Chateauroux the evil genius of their hero, and ascribed to him the heroic devotion to the State which he had in reality borrowed largely from her. The comparative prosperity of Fleury's *régime* was associated with his name, and the fiction of a popular sovereign, whose nullity was yet to obtrude itself in the shameless misgovernment of his future favourites, enchanted the imagination of an impressionable people. The churches resounded with Te Deums over his recovery, and

[1] See D'Argenson, iv. 111-113, and Barbier, ii. 401-409.

the messenger who brought the good news to Paris was the hero of the hour. The whole kingdom donned gala costume, and took to feasting and chanting psalms by turns. Louis was convalescent, he had sought the forgiveness of his ill-used queen in a touching scene at Metz, which turned every Frenchman's head, had promised reformation, had shed tears at the spectacle of the sensibility of his subjects. "What have I done to be thus loved?" asked the astonished hero. "Louis the well-beloved," is the title with which an indulgent nation responds. Characteristically French, and very fine while it lasts, and Louis is strong in his determination to merit all this indulgent sensibility by playing the model king and popular hero for all time coming. The Duchess of Brancas had two pillows placed in the queen's bed in expectation of the return of the prodigal. Maria and her maids of honour dressed in the smartest of bright coloured gowns. "Nothing so *spirituelle* in the art of the toilet seen for ever so long." This expectation proved premature. Louis did not return to the nuptial bed. He was no sooner better than he began to regret his hasty repentance. Confound Fitz-James and his tattle about that receptacle of lost souls. Had I only known what a splendid constitution is this mortal coil of mine, with its big appetite for wine and the rest, bigger now than ever! Such were the reflections of a sorry soul, which felt that it had made a fool of itself. When Maria ventured to ask permission to follow her husband to Saverne and Strasburg, she was drily told that it was not worth her while. Madame de Chateauroux knew better. "As soon as he is well again," wrote she to Richelieu, "I shall trot furiously through his head, I bet, and in the end he will not be able to resist, and will quietly ask Lebel and Bachelier what has become of me."[1] The forecast was correct. After staying out the siege of Freiburg with commendable perseverance, Louis returned to Paris to make his public entry as Louis Redivivus et Triumphator. The following day he attended a Te Deum at Notre Dame,[2] and in the crowds which jubilated his progress to and from the cathedral was Madame de Chateauroux. "I have seen him; he looked joyful and affected, and he is still capable of tenderness." That very evening she received a proof of it in a clandestine visit from her faithless slave. She posed as the offended goddess, and to appease her the sensual suitor had to submit to hard terms. Not a minister of them all but shall hold his place by her indulgence. The Count D'Argenson, who had brought the order to

[1] Lettres Autographes de la Duchesse de Châteauroux, Bibliothèque de Rouen.

[2] See Barbier, ii. 414-420.

retire from Metz, was the bearer of the invitation to return, and saved his post by this act of self-abnegation. Maurepas was obliged to swallow his hatred, and forestall her vengeance by flattery. Exile was meted out to Fitz-James, the Dukes of Chatillon, La Rochefoucauld, Bouillon, and others. The people, which has no court interest to serve, gave vent to a sudden revulsion of feeling in no measured terms.[1] The triumph of the omnipotent sultana was short-lived, however. Madame de Chateauroux never saw Versailles again. She received a more peremptory summons than that of an earthly king. Excitement and intemperance, which had shattered her health, carried her to the grave amid the convulsions of delirium, two weeks after her recall, to which she had not been able to respond. Louis was, of course, prostrated, and the queen, who had a mortal dread of ghosts, was haunted by the thought of the dead duchess. "My God, that poor duchess," she would call out at night to one of her maids, who slept in her chamber in order to keep the spirits away, "if she should return?" "If she should return, madam, it will not be your majesty that receives her first visit," returned the maid. Louis whimpered like a child, and quaked at the thought of hell by turns. The good queen tried to comfort him with texts of Scripture. Religion doubtless afforded him comfort on these trying occasions, if it did not keep him faithful to his marriage vow, but one is certainly rather at a loss to understand the moral sense of both husband and wife. The Duke of Richelieu had also a morsel of comfort to offer. It was not derived from the New Testament, but it was more efficacious. Louis' grief experienced a magic cure in the embrace of Madame D'Etioles, and Richelieu had the honour and happiness of saving the situation once more. With her advent the king regained his composure, and France was again governed by a mistress, whose reign was to last for twenty years to come.

Who is this Madame D'Etioles? Unlike her predecessor, she was a woman of humble origin, the reputed daughter of François Poisson, once, it is said, butcher to the Hospital des Invalides, and afterwards clerk to one of the brothers Paris. He had been tried and condemned to be hanged for embezzlement in 1726, and forced to flee the country. Her mother, the daughter of a provision contractor to the same hospital, was a coarse, but pretty and enterprising woman, and became the mistress of the farmer-general Lenormand de Tournehem. It is questionable who had the best claim to the paternity

[1] Vie Privée, ii. 220, and D'Argenson, and Barbier, who says that it was Maurepas that brought the order to return (ii. 423), but if so he was associated with D'Argenson.

of the gifted child, the husband or the paramour, as both claimed the honour and disputed each other's title. The paramour was careful at all events to give her a most liberal education, which the precocity of Antoinette improved to the utmost. She sang, played, acted divinely. She was superlatively beautiful, graceful, witty. She studied minutely the art of the toilet, and nature and art together made her fascination itself. "A morsel for a king," said her mother fondly. M. Tournehem gave her a handsome dowry, and married her, at nineteen, to his nephew M. D'Etioles, a deputy farmer-general. The jealousy of her husband, the strength of her ambition, kept her faithful while awaiting the grand opportunity. At Paris and at Etioles she was the magnet of an admiring circle, which included Voltaire, the Abbé de Bernis, and other *literati*. Though outside the pale of the court, she was a lady of fashion, if not exactly of quality, whom to know was a consideration. "One of the prettiest women I have ever seen," wrote President Hénault in 1742; "she understands music perfectly, sings with all possible gaiety and taste, knows a hundred ballads, and plays comedy at Etioles on a stage as fine as that of the opera." Evidently it will not be her fault if the king does not get to hear of the enchantress who turns the heads of even dignified judges. She had as yet no chance at Versailles, however. The turn of bourgeoisie beauties was coming at any rate, and there were plenty of expedients for hastening the advent of the day. Who is that smartly dressed, fascinating woman, who drives the smartest of phaetons in the Forest of Sénart, where the king frequently hunts? Dashes through the king's escort, too, disappears like a fairy among the trees. Louis inquires her and name; presents of game follow, and Madame de Chateauroux becomes jealous. Richelieu inquires, too, and puts her on his reserve list in case of emergency. Just the thing to parry the fear of hell with, thinks Richelieu. The duke reasoned correctly. At a masked ball to celebrate the marriage of the Dauphin with an Infanta of Spain in February 1745,[1] Madame D'Etioles appeared in the bewitching costume of a Diana, fittingly contrived to recall the scene in the Forest of Sénart, the keenest and most dazzling of all the wanton beauties in the ballroom. The king approaches a platform where the women of the bourgeoisie display their charms. Diana aims an arrow. "Beautiful huntress," exclaims her victim, "happy they who are pierced by thy darts; thy wounds are mortal." Diana vanishes to reappear in another part of the saloon and heighten the seduction of her person by the play of her wit. As she trips

[1] Barbier, ii. 438-445.

coquettishly away, she drops her handkerchief. Louis picks it up, and with playful gallantry tosses it after her. "The handkerchief is thrown" is the despairing murmur of her rivals. The bourgeoisie grisette had triumphed. Her broken-hearted husband was relegated to Avignon to nurse the resignation that was to earn his recall. The wife presently occupied the small chamber[1] contiguous to the *petits cabinets*, where Madame de Mailly had given the shy king his first lessons in sensuality. Her successor was not the woman to neglect to improve on them.

Madame D'Etioles made her *début* in decent sort of fashion. She was satisfied with making her lover happy in secret. She did not venture, like Madame Chateauroux, to follow him to Flanders when he set out in the beginning of May 1745, to be present at the battle of Fontenoy.[2] She consoled herself for his absence at Etioles, near Corbeil, in the company of Voltaire and the Abbé de Bernis, and received daily the letters and the couriers of the amorous absentee.[3] One of these love-letters was addressed to the Marquise de Pompadour—famous and fatal name in the history of eighteenth-century France. The abbé assisted her in her correspondence, and Voltaire waved the censer with an enthusiasm that bade fair to ensure him a chair in the Academy. The sycophant rhymer even ventured to associate the name of the new favourite with the victory of Fontenoy. The fancy of the poet was a trifle ridiculous, for neither Louis, "that charming hero," nor "the divine Etioles" deserved the credit of that triumph. Never did Mars owe so little to Venus, but the scandalous effrontery of the poet, who had place and pension to deserve, passed unnoticed amid the delirious transports of the nation which expended upon its hero every epithet worthy of greatness.[4] It shut its indulgent eyes when the Marquise de Pompadour was formally presented to the queen on the 14th September,[5] and received a most gracious reception from Louis' lawful spouse, who knew what was expected of her, and carried complaisance so far as to treat the upstart favourite as a distinguished new-comer. She bethought herself of a certain aristocratic dame whom Madame de Pompadour was assumed to count among her familiars. "Madame," stammered the embarrassed mistress, "I have the greatest passion to please you."[6] The official reign of the

[1] Barbier, ii. 448.

[2] *Ibid.*, ii. 450. The Vie Privée says that she did (ii. 277), and Lacretelle (ii. 314) repeats this, but the assertion is erroneous.

[3] Méms. de Richelieu (Barrière) ii. 170.

[4] See Lacretelle, ii. 344.

[5] Barbier, ii. 470, 471.

[6] Richelieu, 171.

marchioness was thus inaugurated, and in the ecstatic verse of the Abbé de Bernis, the event is the apotheosis of chastity and fidelity. *Tout va changer*—a new era is born. Certainly these poets had a way of their own of looking at things. The political effects of this ceremony were not long in making themselves felt. The sway of the new mistress was so complete that she succeeded in making the economic Louis a spendthrift. Extravagance and profusion were henceforth added to the list of the abuses which roused the murmurs of the people.[1] M. Orry, the controller-general, who shared the economic scruples of Fleury, was the first victim. Madame was not satisfied with honours and estates, she must have money to buy friends and a free and lavish hand in the task of amusing the king. M. Orry must, therefore, make place for M. Machault, intendant of Hainault, who, though a man of talent, was content for a time to be the agent of the mistress. The post of director of the public buildings was given to M. Tournehem.[2] Her brother became Marquis de Vandières, a title which, being parodied by the wits of the court into Avant Hier (the day before yesterday), was discarded for that of Marigny. Louis favoured the marquis with his closest intimacy, calling him his "little brother," and his marriage became an affair of the first importance. To his credit, he kept himself as far as possible in the background, and refused both the splendid matches and the high administrative offices which his sister arranged for him. He was satisfied with the congenial post temporarily filled by M. Tournehem.[3]

From these tentative beginnings she soon advanced to unquestioned political supremacy, became in fact prime minister in effect, if not in name. Though her share in the direction of foreign policy has been overrated in regard to certain events, the fatal mark of her influence may be traced in many a disastrous chapter of contemporary French history, in the pusillanimous negotiations at Aix-la-Chapelle, for instance. She trained herself for her political *rôle* by questioning men of experience, and she succeeded in acquiring a sufficient smattering of affairs, became such an adept in the political jargon of the day that she passed in Louis' eyes for a diplomatist of a high order. "From that moment," says the editor of the memoirs of Madame du Hausset, "all affairs were directed by her. The fate of France was decided in a boudoir." Ability and long-tried service did not protect ministers from her enmity.

[1] See Richelieu, ii. 177-179.

[2] Barbier, ii. 476.

[3] See Mémoires de Mad. du Hausset, 103, 111, 112 *et seq*

Maurepas paid for his pointed sarcasm with dismissal.[1] Machault and the Marquis D'Argenson both became the victims of her animosity. The Abbé de Bernis, on the other hand, rose to be secretary for foreign affairs, and the Count de Stainville, better known as the Duc de Choiseul, owed his advancement to her friendship. Her ascendency drew forth the hypocritical flatteries of the highest in the land. Princes of the blood courted her. The moribund Duke of Chatillon, the governor of the Dauphin, supplicated at her altar the favour which he had forfeited at Metz. Nor did she forget her literary friends. Voltaire, Gresset, the younger Crébillon, had ample reason to be grateful for her patronage of literature and art, and her susceptibility to flattery, artfully expressed.[2] The literary men were in consequence her powerful allies in the art of amusing the king. Moreover, these *esprits forts* served as her champions against the Jesuits, whom she detested, and in discrediting the devotees, they enhanced her power. There was Dr Quesney, for instance, Louis' *Penseur* (thinker), and Madame's confidential physician and faithful partisan, who lodged in an *entresol* above her apartment at Versailles. The doctor was a free-thinker (*esprit fort*) as well as a political economist, and in his room the philosophers and politicians of literary tastes met to discuss philosophical, social, and political problems. Thither came Turgot, D'Alembert, La Rivière, Marmontel, Crébillon, Duclos, Helvetius, Diderot.[3] We see them in Madame du Hausset's pages, nursing their reforming views under the ægis of the protection of her mistress, and suborning their talents, some of them, to increase her reputation and her power. Rousseau was included in the number of her literary *protégés*, but Jean Jacques would not descend to flattery, and in a characteristic note, rare in the annals of the literary impecuniosity of those days, declined a present of a hundred livres. Her toleration and encouragement of liberal views would deserve higher commendation, if their motive had been more noble. At her instigation even the Encyclopedia enjoyed the patronage of the king for some time after its commencement in 1750, and in spite of the prohibition of the first two volumes in February 1752,[4] the interdict was eluded in various ways through the connivance of her friend the Duke of Choiseul. To her artful advocacy of the claims of Voltaire is due the fact that, in spite of religious and aristocratic prejudice, the poet basked for a brief season in the sunshine of royal graciousness. The goddess was rewarded by an effusion which she took

[1] D'Argenson, v. 448.
[2] See, for instance, Barbier, ii. 448, and D'Argenson, v. 132.
[3] Mad. du Hausset, 50, 51.
[4] Isambert, xxii. 250.

care to circulate widely, and which had better for his fame been left unpublished. Here is a snatch from it:—

"Ainsi donc vous réunissez
Tous les arts, tous les dons de plaire
Pompadour! Vous embellissez
La Cour, le Parnasse, et Cythère
Charme de tous les yeux, trésor d'un seul mortel,
Que votre amour soit éternel
Que tous vos jours soient marqués par des fêtes!
Que de nouveaux succès marquent ceux de Louis!
Vivez tous deux sans ennemis
Et gardez tous deux vos conquêtes."

Whatever else M. Voltaire was, he certainly was not the poet of honourable domesticity. No wonder that in the circle of the queen's friends, which of course included Voltaire's rivals and Madame's enemies, such a production was regarded as the climax of audacity. To mix up the conquest of the courtesan with the victory of Fontenoy was really too impudent, and Voltaire's audacious metaphors rightly cost him dear. Louis' daughter surprised him in a moment of tenderness, when Pompadour was off guard, into signing the poet's exile.

Madame de Pompadour had one great virtue—she understood how to kill time, and this in addition to her mastery of other arts, less innocent, made her ascendency indispensable to a man without either interests or energy. "How time passes," exclaimed Louis. She could act and she could sing. The *petits cabinets* were transformed into a theatre, of which the Duc de la Vallière was director, the Abbé de la Garde, secretary and *souffleur*, Madame herself prima donna, Louis the Mæcenas, and Voltaire and his brother poets the librettists. Among these actors and actresses who distinguished themselves were such highly titled personages as the Duchess de Brancas, the Countesses D'Estrades and De Marchais, the Marquis de Courtenvaux, the Marquis D'Entraigues, and the Count de Maillebois. A beginning was made in January 1747 with "Tartuffe," with Pompadour as Dorine. "L'Enfant Prodigue" followed the same year. The representation of the "Méchant" ensured its author, Gresset, a popularity which it had hitherto failed to win him on the stage of the Théatre Français. The play was varied by the opera, and the voice of the charmer was irresistible in some erotic or heroic *rôle*, such as "Bacchus and Erigone," "Venus and Adonis," "Tancred," etc.[1] If Louis could be kept from a fit of the *vapeurs* (nervous tremors), which

[1] See Œuvres Choisis de M. P. Lanjon, 71-90; Richelieu, ii. 180-185.

would occasionally revive the fear of hell, her reign was assured. He had a disquieting trick of talking of remorse on these melancholy occasions. One day he entered the favourite's apartment, after perusing a sermon of Massillon's, and asked if he might read it to her. Massillon's sermons might prove dangerous rivals of the "Enfant Prodigue" or the "Mercure Gallant," and Madame answered with a flood of tears. The tears completely drowned Massillon's eloquence, and there was no more reading of sermons.[1] There was no fear on the score of any access of industry on Louis' part, at any rate. If we may believe Richelieu, the favourite could extract amusement for her lazy paramour even out of the dry State papers with which the ministers bored him. During this infliction he would look at Madame with an expressive wink. If the minister faltered he would call out to go on; he was hugely interested, at the same putting out his tongue in order to increase the merriment of the farce. If he was more than usually bored, his guardian angel would quickly come to the rescue. "Go away, M. de Maurepas, you will give the king the jaundice. Adieu!"

Government under such auspices was neither decent nor efficacious, and D'Argenson, now that his short ministry had come to an end, had only too good reason to resume his *rôle* as a prophet of evil. He sees nothing but ruination from the prodigality that has now come into fashion, in spite of frequent famine. That D'Argenson does not exaggerate is proved by the fact that the mistress cost France during the twenty years of her supremacy 35,924,140 livres, besides the vast sums squandered at her instigation.[2] Madame de Pompadour and the brothers Paris are bleeding the State to death. "What a misfortune for the State if this female manages to wheedle our king," he exclaims in December 1747; "pillage will reign everywhere."[3] "The destiny of the State, its whole welfare consists in economy. The great ministers are but great economists. What a great man was M. Sully. All the greatness of Henry IV. derived from the economic spirit of Sully. How fitly did he entitle his memoirs, 'Économies Royales.' Economy! Economy! What ruin menaces us, besieges us already. These taxes and loans are ruining the State. The people will not obey, and if they do not revolt, it will only be because of their extreme weakness." "People speak only of misery at Paris," he adds bitterly, "and yet the balls go on."

[1] Richelieu, ii. 181.

[2] The accounts of her expenses have been discovered and printed by M. Le Roy in Curiosités Historiques.

[3] Mémoires, v. 113. The following quotations are also taken from tom. v.

"Revolts at Toulouse," he notes presently, "revolts for bread, which give rise to the worst fears. In Guienne and other parts of the kingdom there is a riot at each market. The state of Paris is very disquieting, and the lieutenant of police is at his wits' end for a remedy." "Never was there a power in greater danger than France at this moment (December 1747), in regard to its navy and its commerce. England and Holland threaten both with destruction, and their destruction is that of the kingdom itself." "Ruination everywhere, profusion unlimited," is the situation which he describes in February 1748; "Madame de Pompadour wishes to gain favour with the royal family, and is the cause of these ridiculous expenses for the household. M. Mesnard, chief clerk of M. de Maurepas, says that he is not able to expedite all the extraordinary ordinances relative to the household. Where the late king spent seven millions, the present monarch wastes eighteen. The new apartment of the Dauphin costs 1,800,000 livres." "A courtier who has the entry to the *petits cabinets* tells me that the authority of Madame de Pompadour is more absolute than ever. In Fleury's time one could always find ways and means to slip into the king's hands memoirs and representations. To-day every avenue is shut because the mistress has all the valets at command, who tremble before her, or have been bribed by her. The money of the brothers Paris, favours, caresses, importunities carry everything before them." "The condition of the finances is hopeless, and yet the king lives in a state of tranquillity and carelessness past imagination. He sees nothing except with the eyes of the mistress or of the friends of this lady, and believes that everything is going on first rate." "The Marquise de Pompadour sells everything, even the regiments. Our master is falling more and more into the facile habit of being governed by this woman and by those whose sycophant qualities seduce him. Assuredly this *régime* is not for the benefit of the State." "The king passes his days now (March 1748) in seeing the marchioness and the other amateurs being drilled by the professional actors, who are familiarising themselves with royalty in a way that is both sacrilegious and impious." The king is rapidly becoming a mere puppet of this charlatan clique, and politics a mere jargon. "People compare him to the nuns who speak Latin, pray God in Latin without understanding a single word." "I confess with pain that many speak very ill of the king. What can we do, ask they, under a master who neither thinks nor feels?" "Madame de Pompadour and her family are rendering themselves more and more the directors of affairs. . . . She gets presents from all and sundry, and is having four houses built for her at the same

time. . . . The people will not stand this kind of thing much longer, or I am mistaken." "The king even is not excepted from the public reprobation. When he passed over the ramparts of Paris on the road to Compiègne (July 1848), one was struck with the fact that not a single voice was heard crying, 'Vive le roi.'" "Buildings, the expenses of the court, the waste on the war go on with a prodigality and folly comparable to that of the reign of Henry III." "Things are going from bad to worse; the finances are at the last gasp; the treasury is dry, always dry; . . . consideration is shown only to rogues, cheats, and intriguers." "The Marquise de Pompadour governs the State despotically. . . . She is prime minister . . . and the Sieurs Paris govern in her name." "There is no other remedy but to give the king a new mistress in place of Pompadour, of whom the prince seems to be getting tired. Some other beauty, well chosen, more gentle and not tied to the Paris, nor given to music, comedy, politics, will perhaps bring us deliverance." It is (December 1748) evidently time that the Duke of Richelieu were back from the war. "In public and in good society I hear some shocking things said. General contempt and profound discontent toward the government." "His majesty is surrounded nowadays by jugglers, comedians, cheats, *fagotins*. It is worse than under Henry III." (January 1749). But Richelieu, who has arrived, is making progress. Alas, "*on dit* that he is demeaning himself like a fool." "The evil augments, and goes on augmenting." "The king knows all these satires and libels against himself and his government, but in spite of his chagrin he lets things go as they will." "Mad. de Pompadour fears lest Richelieu substitute some other favourite, but she is still dominant and does not leave a moment devoid of some amusement for the king." "New verses against the king . . . they commence thus, 'Incestuous monarch.' You may judge of the rest. It is horrible." "Continual complaints against the government, against the 'cabinets,' the mistress, the ministers. People who arrive from the provinces or from foreign countries are astonished at the degree to which discontent has mounted in France, and at the kind of talk prevalent at Paris. Songs, libels, satires, impudent verses, are multiplied for the purpose of discrediting the monarch. The people are preparing not to show any mark of joy at the celebration of the conclusion of peace." "No joy on the part of the people, no cries of 'Vive le roi.'" "The people would not dance in the places which had been prepared for them. They chased the violinists and all the musicians."

Great fermentation in the people, whose discontent has risen to

a very high pitch. With it is joined great contempt of the government. The person of the king is still loved, but his *entourage*, without exception, envelops him in its own obscurity and confounds him with itself. The taxes are far beyond the capacity of the people to pay, living is dear, there is no income, and still the government spends without receiving. The odious reign of the financiers desolates the State and vilifies the government. . . . People speak of the mistress for whom there is such a plenitude of buildings, pleasure trips, profusions, presents. They read the gazettes and find fault with our foreign policy, saying that we shall soon have ruin or war." "Louis XIV. liked incense; Louis XV. desires to be loved, cherished. Why does he not choose people of the right stamp? His false taste causes the whole mischief. Let him love good, honest people like himself, and he will be loved by the people. Behold the whole knot." "The king has fallen into an extreme melancholy. His relatives try to amuse him as they can; then he has a relapse. The worm is gnawing in secret. He sees, he feels the misery of the people, and how a bad choice in every direction has saddled him with bad ministers, bad intendants, bad generals. Nepotism, family influence, recommendations do all, have deformed all." "The verses distributed against Madame de Pompadour, which the king has seen, in which she is treated as an obscure upstart, and which have probably been made to the order of the ministers, have caused a terrible sensation against this lady. Nevertheless, look out for the day of the dupes. The three ministers (Maurepas, the Count D'Argenson, Machault) may find their places occupied by others." "Songs, verses, caricatures, rain against the person of the king. Among them is a frightful prophecy that he will have no posterity, that his subjects will revolt, and that when the people accorded him its love, it did not know his vices."

> "Lâche dissipateur des biens de tes sujets
> Toi, qui comptes les jours par les maux que tu fais,
> Esclave d'un ministre et d'une femme avare,
> Louis, apprend le sort que le ciel te prépare," etc.

This poet, who proceeds to foretell disaster, revolution, desolation, infamy, was made of other stuff than Voltaire and the Abbé de Bernis. "Bad company increases instead of diminishing in the 'cabinets.' . . . The public is enraged against the mistress. The songs increase daily. One of the most terrible is set to the air 'Des Trembleurs.'" "The Parliament of Bordeaux is in full revolt against the king, forbidding the people to pay taxes as

illegal. What will be the outcome of it? Punishments, no doubt, concentration of troops, exiles, the thunderbolts of despotism. Fear will be the only resort of authority. Let the government look out, their tactics may lead to a popular rising; the Parliaments are the champions of the people." "Two new frightful satires against the king. My hair stands on end. They call for a second Ravaillac, a second Jacques Clément." "The king, *dit on*, is torn by remorse; the songs and the satires have roused him to see the hatred in which he is held by the people, and he discovers the hand of God." "The Parliaments of Paris, Bordeaux, Toulouse, have passed decrees against the tenth. Behold the tocsin of revolt. How this reminds of the most fatal times for the authority of the Crown." "The misery of Paris is increasing. The beggars swarm everywhere. You cannot stop at a door but ten beggars besiege you with their cries. The city is filled with the miserable inhabitants of the country, who flee to the capital and live by beggary in order to escape the oppressions to which they are subjected."

In these extracts we have the reflex of public opinion during the period of Madame's ascendency, when the infatuation of her paramour was still little affected by satiety. They might be lengthened into volumes, for D'Argenson continues for four tomes more to re-echo the sentiments and judgments of his time. These must meanwhile suffice to show the dangerous alienation between king and people accruing from his own incapacity and the misgovernment of the favourite and her creatures. There is no reason to believe that D'Argenson is merely slandering his political opponents and successful rivals. He was, it is true, out of office, in opposition as we should say, and was consequently inclined to be more than ordinarily querulous, but he was both one of the ablest politicians of his time and a sincere lover of the commonweal. He was eminently qualified to judge and entitled to criticise, and the facts he adduces amply bear out the conclusion that France was steadily ripening for a reaction not only against the king, but against the monarchy. One would not be surprised if almost any day this reaction became a revolution, with "Poissonades" instead of Mazarinades. It is as plain as can be that the country is being governed to serve the personal ends of a mistress and her selfish and abandoned clique, whose aim is to maintain their supremacy at any cost.

To maintain this supremacy was, however, an uphill task. It was indispensable to keep Louis in good spirits, to outmanœuvre the Dauphin, who was the rallying point of the Jesuits, and to excite the passions of a man whom excess threatened to deprive of sensual

enjoyment. Madame de Pompadour was equal to the occasion, but it cost her infinite exertion and anxiety,[1] which consumed her health. To parry the Dauphin, whose private life was the antithesis and, at the same time, a reproach to that of his father, was perhaps the easiest part of the task. The Dauphin and his devout friends might well pray and plan. If they could not make Louis a saint, the mistress was safe enough on this score. If he would at least become impotent, they might make a monk of him after all.[2] So mused the simple Dauphin as he smoked his twelve pipes of a morning,[3] while the suppers in the *petits cabinets* became ever more hilarious, and his father nursed his brutish nature in the *Parc aux Cerfs*. To this length had self-indulgence brought this miserable sot of a king, and to the *Parc aux Cerfs* we must follow him in order to realise to what depths of depravity his lustful majesty could sink under the *régime* of this harlot in high places. This language may grate on the delicate ear, but only plain English can bring home to the reader the unutterable baseness of the crimes of Louis XV. against the innocence of the children whom he sacrificed to his lust. It was by this expedient that Madame de Pompadour maintained her sway,[4] and her *femme de chambre*, Madame du Hausset, lets us into the secret without the slightest reserve of delicacy. The *femme de chambre* hides nothing, and is so case-hardened as to forget to apologise to her readers. Vice of the most degrading type is depicted as a matter of course. The book reeks of the brothel, yet we are moving all through it in the highest social circle of France. It is an appalling picture of moral cancer eating away all shame and all true nobility in those who pretend to be "noble," which the gossiping *femme de chambre* unconsciously displays. She does not hesitate to show us her mistress, who is of a cold temperament, drugging herself, and anxiously availing herself of the resources of Dr Quesnay's medical science. When these resources fail her, she does not shrink from becoming the pimp of her lover in order to retain her power. One day, recounts the unabashed *femme de chambre*, her mistress took a diamond necklace from a small cabinet and presented it to the king, with the remark, "I do not think it could be more beautiful." "How good of you," returns the king, embracing her. Madame bursts into tears, and placing her hand on the king's heart, sobs, "It is this that I must have." What is

[1] See D'Argenson, v. 211, 214, 258, 397.

[2] See *ibid.*, v. 89.

[3] *Ibid.*, v. 102.

[4] *Ibid.*, vii. 409 *et seq.*, and see also Historical Memoirs and Anecdotes of the Court of France (translated into English 1811), by Soulavie.

the meaning of this sentimental scene? For whom is the necklace destined? For one of the victims of the royal lust, who has made more than a transient impression on the heart which Madame de Pompadour can only retain by such guilty compliance. "Well, now, how do you find my *rôle?*" asked Madame of the *femme de chambre.* "That of a superior woman and an excellent friend," returned Madame du Hausset. "It is his heart that I must have, and these little girls who have no knowledge of the ways of the world, will not deprive me of it. I should not be so composed, if I saw some young beauty of the court or the town attempt its conquest." The scene of this abominable traffic was the *Parc aux Cerfs*, adds the *femme de chambre*, and sometimes a couple of secret apartments near the chapel of Versailles.[1] Madame de Pompadour, the *femme de chambre*, and the valet Lebel thus succeeded in holding the position. Lebel was a most resourceful valet, with an eye for beauty and innocence, and lured, personally, or through his agents, beauty and innocence from far and near into his net. Bribery and even force were the means used to keep up the supply, which must be large and varied. The victims were kept in ignorance of the high rank of their seducer, who was introduced as a Polish nobleman, and amused his dupes with promises of marriage. Madame de Pompadour had her share in the amusement in listening to the reports of her *femme de chambre*, who retailed the confidential prattle of these innocents, reported to her by "Madame l'Abbesse," as the keeper of the royal brothel was called. These hopes were, of course, dispelled by the sequel. Louis gave an annuity to each of his bastards, who were separated from their mothers, and educated in obscurity. The mothers were married with a dowry, or served as mistresses to the rich debauchees of the capital. Sometimes, however, the Polish nobleman succeeded in kindling a real passion in the object of his lust. Jealousy at his infidelities, or anger at the indignity of their fate, would burst out sometimes even in the royal presence. One young girl was so horrified at the news of Damiens' attempt on the king's life as to excite the suspicion of Madame l'Abbesse, who extorted the confession that she knew who the Polish nobleman was. She had rifled his pockets and found two letters addressed to the King of France from the King of Spain and the Abbé de Broglie. The discovery was unpleasant news to the king, who, on the occasion of his next visit, transferred his attentions to a rival. The discarded plaything was on the watch, however, and burst into the room to appeal hysterically to the kingly honour of her seducer. From this

[1] Mémoires, 77-82.

awkward predicament Madame l'Abbesse delivered him by coaxing the unhappy girl into another chamber and despatching her to a lunatic asylum.

The cost of this villainous establishment was enormous, though the figures vary. Whatever figure is nearest the truth, the truth is appalling. This infamous money was paid, not out of the king's private purse, but in the form of *acquits du comptant*—orders on the treasury signed by the king—and the taxpayer was fleeced by the farmers-general to pay for the secret pleasures of his august sovereign. The suspicion of this added to the exasperation of the taxpayer on the score of an oppressive fiscal *régime*, and the hailstorm of pamphlets, satires, songs, cartoons continued, in spite of *lettres de cachet*, the Bastille, Vincennes, and the iron cage of Mont St Michel.[1] The force of public feeling proved occasionally too much for M. Berryer, the lieutenant of police. The people were goaded to fury by the rumours of the kidnapping of children, and saw in the attempts of the police to cope with the appalling mendicity and vagabondage of the time, by the seizure of vagrants and street arabs, the most sinister tactics. Some of the children of industrious citizens, and even of the middle class, certainly went amissing,[2] and in May 1750 there were several serious riots at Paris. Women rushed madly about demanding the children of which, they believed, the agents of the lieutenant of police had robbed them for the basest of purposes. In their panic these poor mothers believed that the blood of their children was necessary to reinvigorate the crapulous body of the king. Have not his physicians ordered him to take baths of the blood of children? Happily the physicians had not resorted to such unutterable remedies, but the fact that such things could be shouted in the street reveals a terrible state of feeling towards the "well-beloved" of the Metz episode. The mob attacked and killed several of the agents of the lieutenant of police, besieged that functionary in his hôtel, and chased him into the Jacobin monastery. Madame de Pompadour, who happened to be visiting Paris, had to retreat at full gallop.[3] The popular fury was only appeased by a decree of the Parliament, which declared that no order had been given to the police to arrest children, and that if such arrests had been made, the victims would be immediately restored to their parents.[4] To D'Argenson these frequent risings of the populace are very ominous. "All the worse if such outbursts have no real cause such as that adduced, or are not the outcome of party intrigues; all

[1] See Vie Privée, ii. 319, 320.
[2] D'Argenson, vi. 203; cf. 101.
[3] D'Argenson, vi. 212, 218.
[4] See *ibid.*, vi. 202-206.

the worse if it is the welling-up of the universal discontent which only seeks an outlet, and throws itself on the first pretext that comes to hand, fermenting, bursting, and gaining in force on all hands like a gangrene. Thus the men in authority, those charged with the maintenance of order, the police and their agents, are the first to feel the hand and the fury of the people, which were launched upon them under ridiculous pretexts. It sufficed for a man to have the appearance of a police officer to be torn in pieces. Behold the populace of Paris become extremely cruel, lacerating men like savages. From the common constable the hatred and the boldness of the people are turned upwards against the higher ranks, even against the lieutenant of police himself, whom it hates for his severities. . . . The police is compelled to call in the soldiers of the king's guard. Thus the people has thrown off the bridle and dares everything with impunity, for there will be no punishment for these massacres. When the people fear nothing, it is everything. Authority is impotent. There are other objects of its hatred besides the lieutenant of police. Its hatred embraces the king, at least if it is not mollified by favours or by justice."[1] That Louis was held in contempt as well as hated is indisputable. "Among the cries of the populace were heard exclamations of a great contempt for the king." On the other hand, the Parliament was the hero of the hour. "It is regarded as the senate of Paris, and the citizens have a confidence in it which serves more the interests of democracy than those of monarchic government." The fact was that the king was being more and more regarded as the enemy of the people, and withdrew himself as far as possible from contact with the public. In order to obviate the necessity of traversing Paris on the way to Compiègne, a road was specially constructed from Versailles to St Denis. It was significantly known at court as the *chemin de la Revolte*.[2] "What," cried Louis, "I should show myself to this low rabble who call me a Herod!"[3] The air resounded with imprecations of king and mistress, and these imprecations were not restrained by the presence even of the Dauphin, whose carriage was stopped, while on the way to Notre Dame, in November 1751, by a crowd of two thousand women shouting for bread. The Dauphin handed his purse to the commander of his guard, and told him to throw its contents among the people. "It is not your money that we want," cried the women, "it is bread that we need. We love you, but send this harlot who governs and destroys the kingdom about her business. If we had

[1] D'Argenson, vi. 204, 205.

[2] *Ibid.*, vi. 213, 214; Lacretelle, iii. 174-178.

[3] *Ibid.*, vi. 219.

her here, there would not long remain a particle of her to make relics of."[1] This is not satisfactory even to Madame du Hausset, through whose pages the conviction glimmers, occasionally, that things are drifting to the abyss. The *femme de chambre* is bored by Dr Quesnay's economics, but she understands as much of the doctor's conversation with Mirabeau, La Rivière, Turgot, and other visitors to the *entresol* above Madame de Pompadour's apartment, as to realise that retribution is near at hand. "This kingdom," remarked Mirabeau, "is in a very bad way." "It is past regeneration," returned De la Rivière, "except by conquest as in China, or by some great internal upheaval, but woe to those in whose days it shall come. The people of France will not then act with a palsied hand."[2] Louis himself, according to the *femme de chambre*, was uneasy in his conscience, but there was comfort in the reflection that it is his successor, not himself, that will pay the penalty. "Things will last my time, at any rate," he remarked reassuringly to M. de Gontaud.[3]

In spite of the corruption, secret and public, rampant at court, Louis XV. paid some attention to religion, and occasionally even paraded his religiosity before the world. He had his fits of devotion even during the *Parc aux Cerfs* period. "The king," writes D'Argenson, "is continually reciting his prayers."[4] He prayed with the victims of his lust, and taught them the doctrines of a religion which he parodied before God and man. The sermons of the Abbé Poulle during the Advent of 1750 seemed to impress him. They certainly frightened Madame de Pompadour[5] into the resolution to add religion to her expedients for holding her position. She must be able to play the part of the respectable Christian, on occasions, especially in this jubilee year of 1750, when all the world was putting on a pious mien, and the Pope, through the Archbishop of Paris, was representing to his most Christian majesty the scandal of his life.[6] She laboured to explain away the scandal both to the Pope and the world, and fell into a fever in her anxiety to play the decent Christian woman.[7] Louis went to vespers with his daughters, and the mistress would fain have qualified to join the party for fear of the consequences.[8] If only Père Griffet would keep clear of the subject of adultery in those Passion sermons of his, which the most Christian king attends with evident relish, she might yet have a chance of passing for a *dévote*. Père Griffet is dreadfully outspoken, however, and the

[1] D'Argenson, vii. 29.
[2] Du Hausset, 128.
[3] Du Hausset, 72.
[4] D'Argenson, vi. 151.
[5] D'Argenson, vi. 331.
[6] *Ibid.*, vi. 361.
[7] *Ibid.*, vi. 368.
[8] *Ibid.*, vi. 370.

Dauphin and his devotees make a determined effort to second his sermons in honour of this year of jubilee. The death of Madame de Mailly, who had buried herself in true penitence in a convent, suggests a dangerous parallel at this awkward conjuncture. "The devotees reflect that God is taking such care for the conversion of the king, that this death has happened just at the time of jubilee in order to touch his majesty, who is already prepared by the sermons, and inclined to celebrate his jubilee sincerely."[1] Conversion at the price of following Madame de Mailly into a convent is, however, out of the question, and the mistress, who will on no account coquet with Christianity of this kind, redoubles her efforts to amuse the king and cheat Pères Griffet and Perusseau of the fruit of their labours. D'Argenson himself was among the dupes, who hopefully waited for a second miracle of regeneration, such as Madame de Maintenon had worked for Louis XIV. "The devotion of the king," notes he in his practical fashion, "would make the court more melancholy, but it would much profit the commonweal, for the devotees are economical, and economy could alone save the kingdom."[2] Alas for D'Argenson's hopes. Madame de Pompadour got Louis safely over this access of religiosity with no more serious consequences to herself than a fit of persecution directed against the Protestants.[3] She had got a fright, however, and it was plainly advisable, in case of such emergencies in the future, to get absolution in a public fashion, if hypocrisy could get it. The opportunity seemed to have come when, in February 1756, she got herself appointed lady-in-waiting to the queen, and could hope to pose before the world as a person of unexceptional character. She set to work to manœuvre the Pope through a secret agent at Rome. "The king entertains in his heart," the secret agent was instructed to inform his Holiness, "a friendship for, and confidence in, the Marquise de Pompadour which constitutes the peace and tranquillity of his life; these sentiments of his majesty are totally foreign to those which passion excites; it may be affirmed with the strictest truth that for four years and upwards nothing has passed in the intercourse of the king and Madame de Pompadour which can be taxed with passion, and consequently nothing which can be deemed contrary to the severest morality."[4] And so on in the ingenuous strain of one whose high moral character and Christian sentiments deserve a consideration which Père Desmaretz, who is the mere creature of evil-designing persons, has most unjustly refused to evince. The Pope proving equally unfeeling, might not that

[1] D'Argenson, vi. 380.
[2] *Ibid.*, vi. 388.
[3] *Ibid.*, vi. 441.
[4] St Priest, Fall of the Jesuits, 21-25

eminent Jesuit father, Père Sacy, well known as an indulgent confessor in polite society, perform the ceremony for her? Père Sacy was worth a trial at any rate, and received her penitent professions as a hopeful sign of grace. "She rises at night to pray," notes D'Argenson, "she goes to mass every day, she fasts on feast days and Sundays."[1] She wrote to her husband inviting him to return, and the report ran that she had abandoned her place as mistress for that of friend and conciliator of the king and queen. Père Sacy and the other gossips soon found out their mistake. "Religion," complains D'Argenson, "is abused by this comedy, of which hypocrisy is the soul. The Jesuits, in particular Père Griffet, are loud in their denunciations, and blame Père Sacy for his compliance. . . . The marquise pretends to convert the king and regenerate him by her example. Fearing the rivalry of other beauties, she wishes to hold him by a pretended zeal for a virtuous life. It is certainly hypocrisy, and hypocrisy with a fine purpose. Formerly she played the free-thinker, now she takes to talking of revealed religion and pretends to fear the judgments of God."[2] Père Sacy was the object of hostile clamour, and the strange thing is that other hypocrites, besides Madame de Pompadour, who envied her elevation, joined in the clamour.[3] The clamour, however hypocritical in some quarters, was too much for the Jesuit father, and the mistress was compelled to be content with the absolution of an obscure priest.

There was one moment when the fate of the favourite trembled in the balance, nay, seemed sealed irrevocably. When, shortly after (January 1757), the king was struck by the knife of Damiens, the episode of Metz was within an inch of being repeated at her expense. Louis, who was only slightly wounded, believed himself a dying man, would in fact die in spite of the assurances of Dr Quesnay, who told him that, if he were not a king, he might go to a ball to-morrow. The fear of hell would not be conquered by Dr Quesnay's pleasantries. Louis sent for the Dauphin, for Père Desmaretz, for the queen.[4] He lamented his sins, asked the queen's forgiveness, bewailed the state of the kingdom, and appointed his son lieutenant-general. "My son, I leave you the kingdom in a sad state, I hope you will govern better than I have done."[5] Madame de Pompadour shall go, must indisputably go this time, if the fit lasts long enough to give Père Desmaretz, who is absent from Versailles, time to arrive. Madame anxiously waits for a call to the patient's bedside. Not a sound, not

[1] Mémoires, ix. 197; cf. Barbier, iv. 117.
[2] *Ibid.*, ix. 198, 199.
[3] *Ibid.*, ix. 203.
[4] *Ibid.*, ix. 390.
[5] *Ibid.*, ix. 383.

a single *billet doux* to assuage her anxiety. "The marquise," notes D'Argenson in triumph, "has not seen his majesty for a single instant. She has not even received a note from him. . . . The king sees Père Desmaretz, his confessor, every day; he has made some fine declarations of wisdom to the queen. All this presages a great change." Madame de Pompadour weeps, faints, taxes the skill of Dr Quesnay to keep her alive. The ministers arrive; M. de Machault, keeper of the seals, M. de Saint Florentin, minister of ecclesiastical affairs, M. the Count D'Argenson, minister of war, the Abbé de Bernis, just appointed minister for foreign affairs. Madame has already ordered apartments in Paris, and has her luggage packed and her carriage ready. M. Machault advises her to quit of her own accord, instead of waiting for a royal order, and she would certainly have started had the clever little Maréchale de Mirepoix not encouraged her to stick to her post whilst the Abbé exerted himself in her favour. The upshot justified the tactics of the maréchale and the abbé. Louis at length appeared in her chamber, little the worse for his puncture, to calm the sobbing beauty with caresses and Hoffman drops. It was she who remained, and M. Machault and M. D'Argenson who started.[1]

SOURCES OF THIS CHAPTER.—Isambert, Receuil Général, xxii.; Journal de D'Argenson; Journal de Barbier; Vie Privée de Louis XV.; Lacretelle, Histoire de France; Mémoires de Villars; Mémoires de Noailles; Lettres Autographes de la Duchesse de Chateauroux; Mémoires du Duc de Richelieu, edited by Barrière; Mémoires de Madame du Hausset, edited by Barrière; Œuvres Choisis de M. J. Lanjon; Le Roy, Curiosités Historiques; Historical Memoirs and Anecdotes of the Court of France, by Soulavie, translated into English (1811); St Priest, Fall of the Jesuits.

[1] Madame du Hausset, 99-102.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### GOVERNMENT BETWEEN THE PEACE OF AIX-LA-CHAPELLE AND THE OUTBREAK OF THE SEVEN YEARS' WAR—GROWTH OF THE REVOLUTIONARY SPIRIT (1749-1756).

ACCORDING to Voltaire the seven years following the conclusion of the War of the Austrian Succession were the most prosperous years Europe had witnessed almost from time immemorial. Prosperity throve on a peace which seemed assured by the balance of the Powers and the pacific spirit of the nations. "The whole of Europe has hardly ever witnessed more beautiful days than during the seven years following the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1748 up to 1755. Commerce flourished from Petersburg to Cadiz; the fine arts were everywhere held in honour; mutual intercourse kept the nations together; Europe resembled a large family reunited after its disagreements."[1] This picture is somewhat illusory as far as France is concerned. Voltaire, as historiographer royal, looked at the France of Louis XV. with indulgent eyes, and wrote with a desire to please Madame de Pompadour. During these seven years France, according to the Marquis D'Argenson, who had no desire to please Madame de Pompadour, was far from being in a pacific, prosperous state. Its commerce and its industry were still shackled by unfavourable regulations, were in fact declining, and in the greatest danger of being completely crippled by successful English rivalry and competition.[2] "Liberty," cries D'Argenson, "liberty for communities and individuals is what our commerce and industry needs." The misery in the capital and in the provinces was heart-rending. "Frightful misery everywhere; beggars swarming,"[3] is an oft-recurring observation. Riot and revolt gave frequent expression to the popular indignation at oppressive taxation and the still more oppressive *corvée*, and at the suffering which accrued from dearth or

[1] Siècle de Louis XV., Œuvres, xiii. 132.

[2] See, for instance, Mémoires, vi. 424, viii. 62.

[3] *Ibid.*, viii. 169, and see numerous passages in tomes vi. and vii.

maladministration.[1] Ecclesiastical strife rent the land, and throughout the whole period the Parliament was at dagger's end with the government, in opposition to its ecclesiastical and fiscal policy. Instead of enjoying a halcyon interval of prosperity, France, it is evident, was in the throes of civil and ecclesiastical strife, and threatened with collapse or revolution.

Economy alone could ease the terrible strain on the taxpayer, and lighten the enormous debt accruing from the wars of this and the preceding reign.[2] With the public purse-strings in the hands of Madame de Pompadour, economy was hopeless. Still, Machault persevered with his reform programme, which included some admirable economic and fiscal expedients. He tried to ease the peasant and encourage agriculture by according free trade in grain within the realm, and liberty of export at two ports on the Mediterranean coast. He reduced the import duties on certain articles, in order to encourage industry.[3] He found it impossible to comply with the demand for reduced taxation, but he sought to make taxation equitable. While conceding the suppression of the tenth, imposed in 1741, in deference to popular clamour, he substituted an income tax of a twentieth.[4] The principle of the tax, which was to be levied on all classes without distinction or exemption whatsoever, was just. Its object, which was to liquidate the enormous debt, was excellent. Nevertheless, it called forth a storm of opposition, especially on the part of the privileged classes, which were supported by the Parliament and the Provincial Estates. There was, however, an element of hardship in his imposition, in view of the miserable state of the country, which invested the opposition with some colour of justice.[5] The Parliament remonstrated, but was compelled to register the edict by royal command.[6] The Estates of Languedoc, which refused to vote the new tax, were dissolved,[7] and the intendants directed to levy the tax in defiance of its opposition. Those of Brittany were more obstinate and the government was forced to grant some concessions.[8] The others contented themselves with vain remonstrances. It was from the clergy that the most virulent resistance came. M. Machault stil

[1] See, for instance, vi. 51, vii. 81-83, viii. 124.

[2] "La masse des dettes que la necessité a accumulées tant sous le règne du feu roi que dans les dernieres guerres" (Isambert, xxii. 224).

[3] Bailly, Hist. Fin., ii. 129, 130.

[4] Isambert, xxii. 223-225 (May 1749).

[5] See D'Argenson, vi. 93, 94.

[6] Barbier, iii. 80-82.

[7] D'Argenson, vi. 145-157, and Vie Privée, ii. 328.

[8] *Ibid.*, vi. 283-284, 291-292, 360; Vie Privée, iii. 21-25.

further irritated them by an edict of August 1749,[1] which enforced the old laws against the alienation of private property to the Church, nullified all the religious establishments, founded since 1646 without the royal authorisation, and prohibited further foundations without such sanction. The clergy were, therefore, in a very acrid mood, and prepared for a life and death struggle with their enemy. The controller-general, with the favourite at his back, took up a resolute attitude. He ordered the valuation of the ecclesiastical revenues with a view to the more equitable assessment of the clergy.[2] Loud was the outcry of their Assembly, which stoutly denied the right of the government to demand a subsidy, reasserted their right to make a free gift, and resented as an aspersion of their honour the inference that they could not be trusted to make a fair return of their revenues. In response, M. Machault dissolved the Assembly and enjoined the intendants to assess the clergy for the sum demanded. The controller had reckoned without his host, however, in initiating these drastic measures. It would have needed a stronger government than that of Louis XV. to persevere successfully in a struggle with a body which, though not exactly popular, could appeal to the fanaticism as well as the discontent of the people.[3] The pulpits resounded with denunciations of the impiety of the controller-general. Threats of revolt filled the air. "Do not force on us," wrote the aged Bishop of Marseilles to Machault, "the disagreeable necessity of choosing between God and the king. You know which of the two will have the preference."[4] They clung tenaciously to their privileges, and they were strong enough to force the government to compromise. The renewal of the quarrel over the Bull Unigenitus afforded them a handle against the controller-general. Beaumont, Archbishop of Paris, and Boyer, Bishop of Mirepoix and minister of ecclesiastical patronage, constituted themselves the guardians of orthodoxy against the Jansenists, whose leader was the devout Duke of Orleans, and the sceptics, whose prophet was Voltaire. The archbishop enjoined the clergy to refuse the sacrament to those who persisted in disowning the Bull. The refusal of the sacrament involved the refusal of burial with the rites of the Church, and cast a slur on the family of the deceased. It was a social as well as a religious question, and the Parliament, therefore, once more threw itself into the fray. It decreed the arrest of the curé of St Etienne du Mont, who had refused to confess Jansenists *in extremis*, and in spite of a royal injunction prohibited all ecclesiastics from demanding acceptance of the Bull as

[1] Isambert, xxii. 226-235.
[2] *Ibid.*, xxii. 236-238 (August 1750).
[3] Barbier, iii. 223.
[4] Voltaire, Siècle de Louis XV., 161, 162.

an article of faith (April 1752).[1] The quarrel once more took on the dimensions of a serious national convulsion. Schism embittered the Church and the family. "These minutiæ occupied the Parisians," says Voltaire, "much more than all the great interests of Europe. It was as if poisonous insects rose from the corpses of Molinism and Jansenism, and, spreading over the town, stung all the citizens. . . . There were in Paris more than 50,000 fanatics who were ignorant in what country flowed the Danube and the Elbe, and who believed the universe shattered by certificates of confession."[2] The Council of State attempted in vain to compromise.[3] The fanatic curés, encouraged by the archbishop, continued their denunciations from the pulpits and their persecution of dying Jansenists. The Parliament replied by decreeing their arrest, and burning the party effusions of its opponents by the hand of the common hangman.[4] It ordered the archbishop, who supported the recalcitrant clerics, to compel their obedience to its decrees, and on his refusal ordered the seizure of his temporalities.[5] The archbishop appealed to the king, who annulled the Parliamentary proceedings.[6] The Parliament, on its side, remonstrated against this arbitrary action,[7] and its remonstrances proving ineffectual, ceased its functions.[8] Its opposition to ecclesiastical tyranny was thus at the same time a protest against the abuse of absolute power. "The regent acted very wrongly in restoring the right of remonstrance to these fellows of the long robe," said Louis impatiently to Madame de Pompadour, "they will finish by destroying the State. It is an assembly of republicans."[9] He would therefore make short work of their resistance, and replied by banishing the Courts of Inquests and Requests to various provincial towns,[10] and the Grand Chamber, which continued steadfast in its opposition, first to Pontoise, and afterwards to Soissons,[11] and by instituting a *Chambre Royale* to dispense justice in its place.[12] The triumph of the archbishop seemed complete, but a triumph gained at the cost of so much strife and embitterment was not a popular triumph. The people shouted "Vive le Parlement,"[13] and hissed the *chambre royale*. The advocates refused to plead before it.[14] "The spirit of resistance," according to Barbier, one of their number, "was general,"[15]

[1] Barbier, iii. 201 *et seq.*, 360-364.
[2] Siècle de Louis XV., 162.
[3] Isambert, xxii. 252, 253.
[4] Barbier, iii. 396 and 415.
[5] Barbier, iii. 418, 419.
[6] *Ibid.*, iii. 422, 423.
[7] *Ibid.*, iii. 457 (April 1753).
[8] *Ibid.*, iii. 464.
[9] Méms. de Madame du Hausset, 72.
[10] Barbier, iii. 465.
[11] Isambert, xxii. 254, 255 (11th May 1753), and Barbier, iii. 469, 492.
[12] *Ibid.*, xxii. 258, 259 (November 1753).
[13] Barbier, iii. 468.
[14] Barbier, iii. 495.
[15] *Ibid.*, iii. 496.

and the deadlock compelled the government to suppress the chamber,[1] after fifteen months' trial, and negotiate a reconciliation on the basis that both Parliament and clergy should refrain from publicly agitating the question. On this understanding the exiles returned amid cries of "Vive le roi," "Vive le Parlement," and on the 5th September 1754 registered the declaration to this effect.[2] "I will have peace in my kingdom," said Louis in an interview with the leaders of the Church at Choisy. "I have commanded you to observe silence, and if any one transgresses, he shall be punished as the law ordains."[3] Cardinal Rochefoucauld, however, managed to exact, as the price of submission, the exemption of the clergy from the tax of the twentieth. M. Machault's reform plan thus fell to the ground, and the controller-general was transferred to the ministry of marine, in order to make room for M. de Sechelles (August 1754).[4]

This truce did not last long. Some of the bishops and curés would not observe silence, and the Parliament once more summoned the persecuting priests to its bar. It even read the Sorbonne a lecture on the theology of the Bull.[5] The king himself ordered the refractory Archbishop of Paris and the Bishop of Troyes into exile.[6] These redoubled recriminations were complicated by the parliamentary opposition, in which the Court of Aides joined, to the imposition of a second twentieth in view of the outbreak of war,[7] and by a bitter quarrel between the Grand Council and the Parliament over their respective jurisdictions.[8] The object of the government was to diminish both the power and the consideration of this troublesome body, whose right of remonstrance was a thorn in its flesh. It pushed this policy a step further by promulgating an edict suppressing a number of charges in the Parliament.[9] Renewed excitement and fresh remonstrances, which made the situation more strained than ever. The Parliament strove to defeat the move by overtures of association to the provincial Parliaments for the purpose of checking the exercise of arbitrary power.[10] The union of the Parliaments should in fact secure for France parliamentary government on the model of that of Great Britain, should make the Parliaments a united

[1] Isambert, xxii. 259, 260 (August 1754). [2] Barbier, iv. 37-39.

[3] Besides Barbier, the main authority, see also Voltaire, Siècle de Louis XV., 161-166, and Histoire du Parlement, 354-362; Vie Privée, ii. 332-349; Jobez, iii. and iv.

[4] Barbier, iv. 30. [5] *Ibid.*, iv. 83. [6] *Ibid.*, iv. 53, 149.

[7] Isambert, xxii. 268; Barbier, iv. 149 (July 1756); and Vie Privée, iii. 338-362.

[8] Barbier, ix. 101 *et seq.* [9] *Ibid.*, iv. 112, 113 (27th January 1756).

[10] D'Argenson, ix. 294; Barbier, iv. 106.

representative body, and invest this body with controlling legislative functions.[1] The Parliament of Rouen, in particular, strenuously supported the metropolitan court, and even contested the right of the monarch to alter parliamentary decrees, and declared all such arbitrary infringements null and void.[2] To defeat these tactics and restore tranquillity, Louis had recourse to the usual expedient of a *lit de justice*. On the 21st August 1756, he appeared at one of these royal sittings at Versailles, and ordered the registration of the fiscal edicts.[3] In order to settle the ecclesiastical bickerings, he applied to Pope Benedict for an authoritative declaration in favour of moderation. Benedict could not disown a Bull, however foolish, which his predecessors had blessed, but he wrote a letter to the bishops in October, in which, while declaring belief in the Bull necessary to salvation, he permitted the clergy to give the last sacrament to dying Jansenists at the recipients' peril.[4] Armed with this missive, Louis held another *lit de justice* (on the 13th December), this time at Paris, for the purpose of registering three deliverances relative to the Bull, the discipline of the Parliament, and the suppression of charges.[5] These declarations enjoined respect for the Bull, without attributing to it the character of an article of faith, prohibited the secular court from preventing the administration of the sacraments, while admitting their jurisdiction to judge appeals made to them on this subject, commanded the bishops to enjoin the clergy to observe moderation and discretion, threatened the Parliament with prompt punishment in case of disobedience to the royal authority, prohibited all councillors of less than ten years' standing from taking part in deliberations of the general assembly of the various courts, suppressed the fourth and fifth chambers of the Court of Inquests, and reasserted the sole legislative power of the Crown. The declarations were received in dead silence, which was only broken by the voice of the chancellor demanding the vote. Continued silence, which was this time interrupted by the voice of the king, who declared that he would be obeyed, and that he would punish those who refused to do their duty. On the morrow a large number of members resigned their posts, and the chilly impassivity with which Louis was received outside as well as inside the Palais de Justice showed that the sympathy of the people was with the Parliament in its stand against bigotry, arbitrary power, and oppressive taxation. "Fanaticism against the royal power is general at Paris," noted Barbier.[6]

[1] D'Argenson, ix. 322.
[2] *Ibid.*, ix. 311.
[3] *Ibid.*, ix. 319.
[4] Barbier, iv. 162, 163.
[5] Isambert, xxii. 269-271; D'Argenson, ix. 361-363.
[6] Barbier, iv. 168.

The advocates and solicitors once more sided with the Parliament and refused to plead, and the dispensation of justice came to a standstill. M. de Maupeou, the first president, who was suspected of trimming to the court, was denounced as a traitor, and was the object of general unpopularity.[1] "The presidents and councillors of the Grand Chamber (who had not resigned)," notes Barbier, "go every day to the Palais de Justice and open the session as usual, but not a man of the robe appears, and the court is closed immediately after."[2] In order to break their resistance, Louis ordered sixteen councillors into exile.[3] "Dangerous fermentation of the public," notes Barbier.[4] Ultimately he adopted a more conciliatory tone, and gave way to the extent of modifying the edict relative to the suppression of the two chambers, and recalling the exiles.[5]

While Ultramontane and Jansenist anathematised each other over the Bull, they were agreed in persecuting the Protestants. The secret assembly of a number of Protestant deputies in Bas Languedoc in 1744 intensified the spirit of intolerance. The government responded by a number of persecuting edicts consigning anew to the galleys all who took part in a Protestant conventicle, and virtually placing their lives and goods at the mercy of the intendants. The outrages to which they were subjected by these petty despots were not sufficient to sate the fanaticism of the zealots who enjoyed the confidence of the minister of ecclesiastical affairs, St Florentin. The Protestants of the Cevennes, Vivarais, and other districts were hunted down by parties of soldiers,[6] who repeated on a smaller scale the dragonnades of Louis XIV. The strange spectacle was seen of a court steeped in vice and scepticism, preaching the crusade of a bloodthirsty orthodoxy. Society was corrupt, but it was polished, it was religious. Even the libertine Duke of Richelieu, king of rakes in an age of rakes and harlots, signalised, as governor of Languedoc, his zeal for the faith by massacring men and women to whom God and morality were something more than a mockery. Certainly there is room for Voltaire as apostle of humanity and satirist of hypocrisy.

The effect of oppressive taxation, *corvées*, misery, schism, persecution, friction between government and Parliament, was very marked in the growth of a spirit of universal discontent. Criticism of the government became ever bolder, hatred of the king, his ministers, his mistress, ever deeper. The contrast between the poverty of the

[1] Barbier, iv. 165-168.
[2] *Ibid.*, iv. 185.
[3] *Ibid.*, iv. 186, 187.
[4] *Ibid.*, iv. 226.
[5] *Ibid.*, iv. 235, 236 (September–October 1757).
[6] See D'Argenson, viii. 109, 269.

mass of the people, and the dissipation and profusion of the court, exasperated the provinces into frequent revolt. Public opinion became volcanic, and these subterranean forces, which seek expression in libels, placards, pamphlets, riots, refusal to pay taxes, come dangerously near at times to a revolutionary explosion. The symptoms of revolution are indeed everywhere, and D'Argenson does not fail to note them in his journal. Let him once more speak for the nation, whose spirit he translates with such literal accuracy. "I am at present (October 1749) living on my estates in Touraine. I see only frightful misery around me. It is not merely the sad feeling of wretchedness which possesses the poor inhabitants—it is despair. They wish only for death, and avoid propagation. When will such evils take an end? Our ministers are truly incapable of drawing the attention of the king to these things; he is good, but very ill served."[1] The *corvée*, forced labour on the roads, is the main cause, for the time being, of this melancholy state of matters. "It is," he adds, "a new *taille*, worse than the other, which grinds the people in the dust. A quarter of the time of the labourers is consumed by the *corvée*, and they must toil without sufficient subsistence. Their horses, cattle, and mules are also requisitioned without the slightest regard to circumstances." The intendant meets all representations by calling the peasants a set of lazy laggards. They are treated worse than if they were the enemies of the country. Result—the rural population abandons its villages, and crowds into the towns to escape the imposition and the arrears of the taxes. The burdens of those who remain are, therefore, all the harder. Of the officials nine-tenths, he concludes, are scoundrels, of whom the farmers-general and the receivers-general are the chief. "One fine morning the whole kingdom will crumble in pieces. Money is hardly seen in the provinces."[2] "Reports are being spread among the people of Paris very adverse to the love and respect due to the king" (D'Argenson, it is to be noted, was a staunch monarchist). "His majesty, it is said, is entirely disgusted with work, did not, in fact, work three-quarters of an hour during his sojourn at Fontainebleau. One cannot enter a house but one hears ill spoken of the king and his government."[3] "Everybody nowadays is against the government, which is profoundly misesteemed."[4] "The most violent exclamations are showered by the populace of Paris against the king" (*apropos* of the riots). . . . "The most terrible feature of this sedition is the fact of these diatribes against the person of the king, as was the case in the

[1] D'Argenson, vi. 49-51.
[2] *Ibid.*, vi. 61.
[3] *Ibid.*, vi. 173.
[4] *Ibid.*, vi. 209 (June 1750).

days of the League against Henry III. . . . All the ministers and favourites of the 'cabinets' are regarded in the same light as the *mignons* of Henry III., into whose pockets go all the taxes wrested from the people. . . . The people wished to rush to Versailles to burn the palace, built, they cried, at their expense."[1] "Nothing but stupidity, sterility, blindness, obstinacy, in the government, which will end in the certain ruin of all government, detestation of the king, fatal revolts."[2] "'All heads are deranged on the subject of the government, not only at Paris, but throughout all the provinces. The vessel of State seems absolutely abandoned; the sailors work as little as the pilot."[3] "Extraordinary antipathy between the king and the people, especially the people of Paris."[4] "The reciprocal hate between king and people goes on augmenting." "The king is depressed at the proofs of a love changed to hatred. The evil lies with the false and idiotic people about him, who deceive him as to the real state of affairs."[5] "'The first time there is a riot,' cry the people" (*apropos* of the execution of five rioters), "'we will do the thing better, we will burn, massacre, destroy these magistrates.'"[6] "A splendid harvest, but how can the people enjoy the fruits of their labour, unless protected from the vexations of the financiers and the royal officials, who are the enemies of their liberty and their welfare. Put the people in a position to snap its fingers at these tyrants, let it progress by its own interest, and all will go well."[7] "One sees the sad spectacle of the king at war with his subjects on all hands" (*apropos* of the imposition of the twentieth). "The report runs that the clergy, as its last resort in the struggle with the king over the twentieth, will appeal from the arbitrary authority of the king to an assembly of *States-General*. They talk in this fashion, 'I, the clergy, maintain that you, the king, have no right arbitrarily to exact taxes and dispose of them as you please without the intervention of the nation. You are an usurper!'"[8] "I fear," adds our journalist in comment, "that if this kind of thing goes much further there will arise men who will maintain the national cause with republican colouring, and these men will then become dear to the people, even if they have no great merit or genius. . . . To-day there are enlightened writers and philosophers to teach these principles which has blown from England for some years on this matter. The material is combustible enough. This is apparent from the remonstrances of the Parliaments and the Provincial States."

[1] D'Argenson, vi. 212, 213.
[2] *Ibid.*, vi. 221, 222.
[3] *Ibid.*, vi. 232.
[4] *Ibid.*, vi. 235.
[5] *Ibid.*, vi. 252.
[6] *Ibid.*, vi. 318, 319.

which will furnish the popular leaders I speak of. The whole nation will take fire; the nobility will join the clergy, then the Third Estate, and, if necessity brings about the assembly of the States-General, there will be plenty of matter in regulating the finances to provide it with work. These States-General will not assemble for nothing. Let the government be warned. The thing will be very serious, *quod Deus avertat.*"[1] Evidently our Diogenes journalist has a shrewd eye in his head. The whole drama of the National Assembly of 1789 is by anticipation compressed into this short paragraph. "The court, the court, the court! In this word is contained all the evil. The court is become the sole senate of the nation; the smallest valet of Versailles is a senator; the chambermaids have their part in the government, if not to ordain, at least to prevent laws. When a reformation of the State is in question the ministers tremble before a valet, how much more before a favourite, who is in high credit with a monarch too facile and too good towards those around him. This ascendency of the court dates from the time since there has been a capital expressly made for the court (Versailles). The evil consequences of this were already felt under Louis XIV. Under him, and especially his successor, the ministers have perfected the arbitrary royal authority, and the court thereby augmenting its authority over the nation, the taste for luxury has increased to such an extent that the nobility has become poorer; the honour of expending in the grand style, the dishonour of economy have increased likewise, and plunge us every day more and more into the necessity of raising ourselves and living by rapine. The court prevents all reforms of the finances, and increases the disorder thereof. The court corrupts the naval and military profession by its promotions by favour, and prevents the officers from striving for elevation to the higher ranks by good conduct and emulation. The court stands in the way of the merit, authority, and permanence of the ministers and their subordinates. It corrupts manners by teaching the young people intrigue and venality as the means of advancement instead of emulation in virtue and work. It breaks the neck of merit the moment it shows itself. It impoverishes the country so that soon even the financiers will have no more money. It hinders, finally, the king from ruling and discovering the virtues which are in him."[2] "In the country where I am residing, I hear that marriage and population are alike in a state of lamentable decline. The young men and women will say to you, It is not worth the trouble to bring into the world miserable creatures

[1] D'Argenson, vi. 320 (December 1750).

[2] *Ibid.*, vi. 321, 322.

like ourselves."[1] "A soldier of the guard has been arrested on suspicion of putting a note on the king's table which contains this horrible sentence, 'You are going to Choisy; why are you not at St Denis?'" (the burying-place of the French kings).[2] "People speak of *nothing but the necessity of a revolution* in the near future owing to the wretched state of the administration of the kingdom. This revolution . . . will deprive the court of its extreme influence in the government, and will perhaps demand a council or even the States-General. But the passage to these new arrangements is difficult and dangerous by the way of revolution, for it can only be accomplished by revolts all over the country."[3] "People are becoming more and more savage in the province which I inhabit. The peasants are no longer anything but poor slaves, beasts of burden attached to the yoke."[4] "The Parliament appeals (in its struggle with the king) to the fundamental constitution of the kingdom This is tending to the revolt of the nation from the king."[5] "There is a breeze of free and anti-monarchic government blowing from England through the philosophers. It is penetrating the minds of men, and we all know how opinion governs the world. It is possible that many have already made up their minds to establish this government at the very first opportunity, and perhaps the revolution will take place with less struggle than is believed. It may come without prince, lord, or religious enthusiasm, may be born of spontaneous acclamation, just as the Popes sometimes elect themselves. Every order in the State is discontented at the same time. The military men . . . are treated with harshness and injustice. The clergy are abused and buffeted; the Parliaments, the other corps, the provinces likewise; the *pays d'état*, the common people overwhelmed and devoured by misery; the financiers triumph over all and revive the reign of the Jews. All these matters are combustible, a riot may lead to a revolt, and *a revolt to a complete revolution*, in which the people will elect its veritable tribunes, its committees, its communes, and the king and his ministers will be deprived of their excessive power for mischief. The best argument adduced against this is, that absolute monarchic government is excellent under a good king, but who will guarantee that we shall always have Henry the Fourths? Experience and nature prove, on the contrary, that for one good king we shall always have ten bad ones."[6] D'Argenson had read the history both of his own time and of France before him aright. Absolute monarchy

[1] D'Argenson, vi. 322, 323.
[2] *Ibid.*, vi. 330.
[3] *Ibid.*, vi. 403, 404 (May 1751).
[4] *Ibid.*, vi. 425, 426.
[5] *Ibid.*, vi. 452.
[6] *Ibid.*, vi. 464 (September 1751).

has proved a huge failure, and has ended in this eighteenth century by breeding in men's minds the conviction that France has had more than enough of it. The idea that a revolution is near at hand has become a fixed idea. It is now no mere speculation; it is merely a question of time. "An officer who has arrived from various provinces where his regiment was stationed, says that he would not be astonished if there were risings in these provinces as at Paris. The discontent is so acute and profound that it has taken possession of all orders."[1] "The minds of the people are much occupied at present with the coming revolution of the government. People talk of nothing else; even the bourgeois are absorbed in this subject . . . The struggle with the clergy is a godsend, say they, *for it will hasten the revolution.*"[2] "The government is taking extraordinary measures for the security of order at Paris in order to forestall sudden revolts of the populace."[3] "Notes and placards have been put into the hands of the Jesuits, conceived in something like the following terms: 'You, my reverend brethren, who knew how to get rid of Henry III. and Henry IV., have you not among you at present some Jacques Clément, some Ravaillac, who may rid us of Louis XV. and his harlot?' . . . Others have been found scattered all over Paris with the words, 'Tonsure the king, hang Pompadour, break Machault on the wheel.' Here are marks of a meditated rising and of the means of exciting it. Bread is dear and is getting ever dearer. New revolts are to be feared, popular fury, pillage of houses, massacre of ministers."[4] "The French people is not only wild against the monarchy; philosophy and its votaries among the men of culture and *bel esprit* urge war on our holy religion. Revealed religion is flouted on all hands, and the efforts of the devotees, particularly the Jansenists, to get people to believe, only stir up the infidels to greater activity. The devotees write books which nobody reads; people hardly dispute; they laugh at everything, and persist in their materialism. The devotees wax furious, they denounce their opponents, cry out for an inquisition of writings and spoken words; they drive matters with injustice and fanaticism, which does far more harm than good. The wind of anti-monarchy and anti-revelation has blown on us from England, and as the Frenchman always tends to outdo the foreigner in everything, he goes further and becomes ever bolder in these courses of effrontery."[5] "In England people ascribe the evils of misgovernment to the ministers, and never attack the person of the king. Here, on the other hand, the French,

[1] D'Argenson, vii. 1. [2] *Ibid.*, vii. 23. [3] *Ibid.*, vii. 29.
[4] *Ibid.*, vii. 49-51. [5] *Ibid.*, vii. 51 (December 1751).

more attached to persons than to things, for want of solidity of mind, turn first against the king, and this oftener under Louis XV. than under any previous sovereign. . . . With the commonplace and inhuman ministers in office, the king draws on himself more and more every day the national hatred. This is deplorable."[1] "There has just appeared a book entitled, 'What Will They Say?' It is completely republican. . . . Half of it is excellent. The following passage is striking: 'A king without a mistress is very estimable, if at the same time he is no devotee.'"[2] The court and the devotees think to dam back the flood by *lettres de cachet*, the Bastille, the iron cage of Mont St Michel. The Jesuits and the Jansenists join in making war on the Encyclopedists, suppress the Encyclopedia, to the indignation of our journalist. The gag is unavailing, so long as there are secret printing presses at Paris, and ready publishers in Holland. "The Inquisition is being perfected in France. The Jesuits, the grand inquisitors, increase the scope of their jurisdiction. . . . If it is not Jansenism, it is irreligion they are after. They are the censors, informers, accusers, judges. They have made a noise about it to the king; hence the increase of hypocrisy and intrigue, and religion is being discredited more than ever."[3] "The English have well known the Jesuits, and they are not more on their guard against wolves than against them. They know what they have done under the Stuarts, and what they would do still, if they were allowed entrance into their island. Every father who desires to educate his son as a statesman need only give him the books against the Jesuits to read."[4] "We see the effects of the credit of the Jesuits in the government. . . . The king, nurtured with the maxims of Fleury, believes that the progress of Calvinism in France is ascribable to the negligence of Francis I. and Henry II. in repressing it at the outset. He wishes to take warning from this example, he pretends to be firm, but he is being abused by those who push him to the most dangerous excesses."[5] "All things are in a state of insurrection; the Parliament has nothing to fear; it is the entire nation which opposes this unreasonable and arbitrary will, with the Parliament at their head."[6] "On Sunday last (August 1752), the king, the queen, and the Dauphiness came to Paris to return thanks to God in Notre Dame for the convalescence of the Dauphin. On Saturday the price of bread was lowered in order to secure a better reception for their majesties. Nevertheless, a poor man laid one hand on the carriage of the queen, and holding up in the other a piece of black bread,

[1] D'Argenson, vii. 78. [2] *Ibid.*, vii. 87. [3] *Ibid.*, vii. 102, 103.
[4] *Ibid.*, vii. 180. [5] *Ibid.*, vii. 197. [6] *Ibid.*, vii. 199.

cried, 'See, madame, what we have to pay three sous the pound for.' . . . . There were a few idlers at the Petits Cours who called 'Vive le roi,' but in Paris not a soul uttered a sound."[1] "The bad effects of our absolute monarchic government have succeeded in persuading France and all Europe that it is the worst of all kinds of governments. I hear the philosophers continually averring that anarchy even is preferable. . . . Here we have a monarch mild of character, but without any energy, leaving things to go as they please, and the dominant abuses inaugurated by the pride of Louis XIV. necessarily tend to the destruction of the kingdom. No reformation where it is necessary; no amelioration; choice of officials without enlightenment; prejudices of the time dominant without examination. Thereby everything tends more and more to the national destruction; everything falls piece by piece, and individual passions make progress underground, and undermine and destroy the State. . . . Vice is sapping society, nature, and the force of the nation. The nullity and impotence of our governors only render the remedy more hopeless. Nevertheless opinion gains ground, and *this may lead to a national revolution.*"[2] "All who observe the king say that he often shows an extreme disquietude and anxiety, and only some bout of dissipation causes him to forget his cares entirely."[3] "The salaries of the household are left unpaid. . . . Nevertheless the ballets of the court cost prodigiously. . . . The 'Devin du Village' has cost 50,000 crowns."[4] The following is the prayer of the king according to our journalist: "'Let me sleep, leave me in peace, let me go to my country seats, to my little pleasures, my habitudes; leave me my buildings, my small fund of knowledge, some small curiosity or pursuit which will not cost much. Let me have tranquillity at court, in the realm, with my neighbours. I should be very happy to obtain some glory which would not cost me any trouble. Otherwise the old order, without question, the old religion.' It is the reign of Morpheus," adds the journalist.[5] "Jean Jacques Rousseau . ... says that men of letters ought to take three vows, poverty, liberty, verity. This has disposed the government against him."[6] "The Parliaments are beginning to attack the ministers, as in England, and as has not been done in France since the days of Mazarin. They say that the throne is beset, that the ministers abuse the royal confidence, etc. This may produce startling effects, and take the same turn as in the

[1] D'Argenson, vii. 288, 289.
[2] *Ibid.*, vii. 294, 295.
[3] *Ibid.*, vii. 314.
[4] *Ibid.*, vii. 341.
[5] *Ibid.*, vii. 354.
[6] *Ibid.*, vii. 457.

troubles against Mazarin."[1] "One may attribute the decline of religion in France, not so much to English philosophy, which has only gained the adhesion of some hundred philosophers at Paris, but to the hatred of the priests, which has become excessive. These priests can scarcely show themselves in the streets without being hissed. All this comes of the Bull Unigenitus as well as the disgrace of the Parliament."[2] "It is the general opinion that the nation is superior to the king, as the Church universal is superior to the Pope. Judge from this doctrine what changes may come about in all governments."[3] "In order to govern better, it is necessary to govern less" (*àpropos* of the subject of liberty of commerce). "But when will this system come in vogue? Perhaps never."[4] "The king is a capital card-player, and prides himself in mystifying his opponent. He mistakes the mysterious for the secret. His minions have inspired him with hatred for the common welfare, carrying everything before him for his *imprimatur*, and despising good men and citizens as fools."[5] "Only the most fatal questions are agitated nowadays among the people. The royal power is treated as usurpation and tyranny. After succeeding in persuading the minds, who will say that the bodies will not be set in motion by this impulsion? Who is to blame? The government assuredly."[6] "The favourite exercises more and more a dominant influence on the government, . . and the kingdom suffers more and more, and is bound to suffer from this attachment. That a private individual keeps a mistress causes little scandal, but when it comes to the administration of the kingdom, we simply cannot accustom ourselves to it. Decency, duty, the dignity of the government are outraged by this practice."[7] "The king has made the following remark" (*àpropos* of the resistance of the Parliament): "'There can be no king if there subsists in France a Parliament such as there was before the *lit de justice* of the 13th December.' . . . The force of obstinacy is greater in men of small intelligence than in the case of luminous minds. . . . The people is seized with a mute rage over this event" (the defeat of the Parliament), "but let no one imagine that there are wanting channels for communicating to the masses the idea of resistance. The men of the law are everywhere, . . . and there is a general esteem for the magistracy, which is to-day the most estimable portion of the nation by its manners, its knowledge,

[1] D'Argenson, viii. 11 (May 1753).
[2] *Ibid.*, viii. 35.
[3] *Ibid.*, viii. 153.
[4] *Ibid.*, viii. 220.
[5] *Ibid.*, viii. 223.
[6] *Ibid.*, viii. 281.
[7] *Ibid.*, ix. 201 (February 1756).

its enlightenment. Further, the whole lower rank of the Church is opposed to the Bull and its fanatics, and this is a cardinal fact to be reckoned with. All the provinces, and the higher and lower courts are on the same side. Finally, there is the misery which preaches a sullen discontent against the court, the undisguised fury against the greed of the financiers, an open revolt against the intendants; envy, poverty, hunger—all this makes for resistance."[1]

These extracts speak for themselves. Something must, of course, be allowed for their haphazard, diarist character. They are the impressions of the moment, and the impressions of the moment sometimes need pruning, and would be improved by reservations here and there. In the main, however, they may be accepted as a trustworthy picture of the situation of France between the years 1749 and 1756. That situation reveals all the features of that of 1789. The history of France was for fully half a century before 1749 the gradual rise to a revolutionary climax, and the climax was already reached in 1750, though it was not to receive its dramatic *dénouement* for another forty years. It was only delayed by accident, as it were. Had the Parliament been in as independent a mood as it was during the Fronde or the League, had the Provincial Estates held their ground and represented the interests of the nation as well as their own, had, more especially, the demand for the States-General been conceded, the State would certainly have been revolutionised some time between 1749 and 1756. As it was, nothing could now prevent that revolution except radical retrenchment and reform. The monarchy, as represented by Louis XV., was, however, incapable of radical retrenchment and reform. It is dying of dissipation and decrepitude, and the spasmodic resort to arbitrary expedients is totally unfitted to check its dissolution, and only tends to nurture in the nation the revolutionary consciousness of its rights and wrongs. D'Argenson has the foreboding of disaster, and this foreboding is no mere tremor of a nervous moment. It is a settled conviction, for it recurs again and again, and it is the conviction of all reflecting persons. And certainly the state of things which he depicts amply justifies it. The king is a sheer phantom of a king, who pretends to govern in virtue of absolute right. He is the puppet of an artful adventuress, the slave of his own passions, the votary of a revolting sensuality. He has neither head nor heart, has no energy and no spirit, is impotent and inert, is obstinate, ignorant, and slothful, neglectful of the duties while jealous of the arbitrary rights of his office, is in fact morally and intellectually a complete nullity. He is flattered and deceived

[1] D'Argenson, ix. 377, 378.

by a set of selfish, greedy, intriguing courtiers; he is hated and despised by the bulk of the nation, especially at Paris, which, according to D'Argenson, is France. The government is as inane as the king; the members are as impotent as the head. Its domestic policy fails to cope with the desperate situation to which its foreign policy has reduced France, for M. Machault, its strongest support, bends before the storm which his fiscal expedients conjure. Nowhere is the strong hand, the wise head in evidence. Arbitrary devices, spasmodic reforms do not betoken either strength or wisdom at the helm of affairs; they only increase friction, intensify the spirit of revolt and resistance. The ministers are not the leaders of the nation; they are its tyrants, and they are regarded more and more as its enemies. The government is not the motive force of the State. It is distrusted and hated, and the distrust and hatred are directed against the monarchy as well as the government. The only hold of the monarchy on the nation is that of habit, tradition, convention, and this tradition, this convention has been sapped by mal-administration. The blind advocates of tradition may well declaim, as they were to do later, with Burke in the van, against the revolutionary spirit of the age, bewail its revolutionary temperament. They may as well denounce a fever which consumes the body of the patient. Denunciations are no explanations and no remedies. The people are, too, learning to look for remedies outside the government. Their teachers are the philosophers, their reformers the members of the Parliament, representative of that large middle class which is growing in intelligence, influence, and, in spite of the misery of the peasantry, in wealth. The idea is becoming dominant that the nation must help itself, must call the States-General, its rightful constitutional representative, to the rescue, and this self-help, it is evident, will produce some startling developments. For the moment it is English political liberty that is to afford the panacea, but Jean Jacques Rousseau and militant democracy are already in the background, and may push into the foreground and improve on the English constitution. Even the Church and the people are becoming more and more antagonistic. The Church is almost as unpopular as the monarchy. It is rich, quarrelsome, and overbearing, as well as bigoted, intolerant, and immoral. The nobility, too, is losing its prestige, its popularity. It is corrupt, if polished, addicted to pleasure, unfitted, for the most part, to play any other *rôle* than that of the parasite of the people and the satellite of royalty. It is an oppressive caste, fit associate of an oppressive monarchy. Both monarchy and nobility, by their luxury, their dissipation, their extra-

vagance, are burdens to the people, which is unutterably miserable at times, and curses the corruption of Versailles, the emblem of a *régime* of favouritism and spoliation. Finally, the people itself is the victim of a misery which will make its awakening a terrible one. It is ignorant and oppressed; it may easily become savage.

There was one individual of a fanatic temperament, loafing about the streets of Paris at this period, who was evidently of opinion that the hour of revolution had struck, or was at any rate determined in his own mind to strike it forthwith. Robert François Damiens, the individual in question, being out of work, had taken to politics, and had mixed up his politics with religion. He had been a valet in various Parisian families, and in a Jesuit establishment, before the invectives of the Parliament and the Jansenists transformed him into a patriot at large of dangerous excitability. Robert François was born a generation too soon for his self-appointed vocation as regenerator of the State. He would have found that vocation in the heat of the Revolution thirty-five years later, and would have been one of the most popular of *sans culotte* cut-throats under the *régime* of Robespierre. He was resolved at all events to anticipate the future, and get rid of a hated king. He accordingly stole into the crowd which assembled in the courtyard of Versailles to witness the departure of his majesty to Trianon on the 5th January 1757. Being very cold, everybody was wrapped in a greatcoat, and beneath the cloak of Damiens was the knife that was to bring salvation to France and immortality to its deliverer. The dusk and the carelessness of the guard, who mistook him for one of the royal attendants, enabled him to approach close behind the king. In another moment he had drawn the knife from the folds of his greatcoat and plunged it into the king's right side. At the prick of the sharp steel Louis turned round and confronted his would-be assassin and the saviour of his country. "This is the man that has struck me," he exclaimed, "let him be arrested, but do him no harm." He was at once seized, while the king was assisted upstairs to his bed, believing himself a dying man, and crying out for his confessor. The thrust of Damiens' knife produced great consternation and excitement of a kind. The Archbishop of Paris ordered prayers to be recited for forty hours without a break. The theatres were closed, and so was Madame de Pompadour's boudoir, but though Voltaire and Madame du Hausset portray in vivid terms the terror and sorrow of the people, there was undoubtedly not much real anxiety as to the king's fate. There were naturally some sentimental tears, to which the French are

easily excited.[1] The chief anxiety was that of Louis himself, for if Damiens' knife had failed to reach his majesty's heart (thanks to his thick greatcoat), it had certainly pierced his majesty's conscience. Whilst the churches had been crowded with grief-stricken petitioners thirteen years before, they were empty now.[2]

The miserable lackey had, meanwhile, been stripped by the guard and tortured in the presence of several of the ministers before the lieutenant of the grand provost, to whose cognisance all crimes committed within the precincts of the palace belonged, arrived to put a stop to this barbarous method of examination and to interrogate the prisoner officially. Damiens professed a religious motive for his action, and assumed a prophetic tone. His listeners took him for a madman, but in little more than a quarter of a century France was destined to be as mad as he in its regicide proclivities. "I am very sorry to have had the misfortune to approach you, sire," wrote the madman, "but if you do not take the part of your people, you and the Dauphin and several others will perish before many years hence. It would be a pity that such a good prince should not be sure of his life, owing to his subservience to the priests, to whom he accords his whole confidence. If you have not the goodness to remedy this soon, great misfortunes will come upon the kingdom. Your subjects will renounce their allegiance to you. If you have not the goodness to order that the sacraments be given to those to whom they have been refused, . . . I reiterate that your life is no longer sure," etc. Even a madman may speak the truth in his own fashion at times, and it is evident that this overheated brain, which the politico-religious quarrels of Parliament and clergy had unhinged, has some conception of the fact that there is something very wrong in the body politic. Being a *sans culotte* before his time, he was sent before the Grand Chamber of the Parliament to obtain the sentence which this highly polished eighteenth century deemed adequate to his crime. His passage to Paris was made the occasion of an amount of parade which would have done honour, in the words of Voltaire, to an ambassador. He was of course put to the torture, but even the most excruciating suffering, which the ingenuity of the hangman could invent, failed to extort any sensational details. It discovered no conspiracy, though Damiens when arrested had mysteriously warned his guards to take care of the Dauphin. The only significance of the crime lay in the discovery that there was a vast amount of hostile criticism of king and clergy circulating in society, and that this criticism had filtered into the lowest strata of the people and had

[1] See Barbier, iv. 172.

[2] Vie Privée, iii. 113.

lodged in the overheated brain of a vagrant valet, of not over respectable antecedents, who had resorted to a method of righting the abuses of the State which was destined to become erelong as popular as it now seemed monstrous. In the meantime the monster should duly get his deserts, while the monsters in high places were left unscathed to fill up the cup of their monstrosities in order that posterity might atone for them. On the afternoon of the 28th March the prisoner was placed on a scaffold in an enclosure in front of the Hôtel de Ville, and bound with strong ropes. Soldiers surrounded the barricade, and were distributed in companies all over Paris. The scene that followed was worthy of a band of Red Indians, although it was enacted in this highly polished eighteenth-century France. The right hand of the wretched man was burned from the wrist, his flesh torn with pincers, molten lead, boiling pitch and oil poured into the wounds. The piercing cries of the victim rent the air, for he still retained consciousness. Then came the climax. Four horses were yoked to the bleeding body. They pulled in different directions, but they pulled to no purpose. Two more were added, but even their added strength failed to tear the joints asunder. Finally the axe was applied, and the severed limbs were cast into a burning pile and reduced to ashes. It was altogether a grim spectacle for the tens of thousands that crowded to the Hôtel de Ville, and especially gratifying to the eager curiosity of the women of the higher classes, who passed their time playing high stakes in the rooms overlooking the square, which were let at enormous prices.[1] Beccaria, Montesquieu, and other advocates of a more humane jurisprudence, had evidently their work still before them. One thing is nevertheless certain. The popular estimate of the sacredness of royalty was by no means so high as the legal one.

SOURCES OF THIS CHAPTER.—Isambert, Recueil Général, xxii.; Journal de D'Argenson; Journal de Barbier; Voltaire, Siècle de Louis XV., and Histoire du Parlement; Bailly, Histoire Financière; Vie Privée de Louis XV.; Jobez, La France sous Louis XV.

[1] For an account of this affair see Barbier, iv. 169 *et seq.*; Voltaire, Siècle de Louis XV., 171-175, and Hist. du Parlement, 365-371; Vie Privée, iii. 112-128.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### The Seven Years' War—A Fatuous Foreign Policy and its Fruits (1756-1763).

An ominous state of matters for a nation on the brink of a seven years' war. The foreign policy of Louis XV., at this juncture, tended to aggravate the abuses accruing from his internal administration, and these abuses in their turn tended to lame his foreign policy. France was launched into a war which it was impossible that it could maintain with vigour, and from which it could hardly emerge with success. Even if the restiveness of Maria Theresa and the aggressive attitude of Great Britain made war unavoidable, even if the French government could hardly negotiate itself clear of complications, this fact does not make the case against it less discreditable. If a government takes the wrong road, it is a poor excuse to say that it did not know the road and could not help it. It ought to know, it ought to show ordinary intelligence at least. It is its business to understand its business. If the evil day is at hand, it should understand how to set its house in order against the evil day. Instead of doing this, the government of Louis XV. showed itself, at this crisis in the affairs of Europe, both short-sighted and incapable. It pursued a fatal internal policy, and it neglected to prepare adequately for an international conflict, which, in view of the conflicting interests of the European Powers, seemed inevitable. Foresight and statesmanship were lamentably lacking in the councils of Louis XV. Alike in penetration and preparation, these councils are imbecile and impotent.

The Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle was, as I have already remarked, a truce rather than a peace. It did not extinguish the resentment of Maria Theresa against the King of Prussia, whom she regarded as a spoiler of her dominions. It did not harmonise the rivalry of Great Britain and France for the predominance in North America and India. It was primarily from this latter quarter that the first impulse to an all too early renewal of hostilities came. Boundary

disputes on the frontiers of Canada and the British North American colonies led to blows. In India the struggle between the rivals had hardly been interrupted by the peace. While direct hostilities ceased, both maintained the contest indirectly by espousing antagonistic sides in the revolutions of Indian politics. For a time fortune seemed to favour the realisation of Dupleix's project of a Franco-Indian empire. By 1751 French influence was supreme in the Deccan and the Carnatic. Dupleix had become the virtual ruler of a vast territory as the reward of his support of the cause of Murzapha and Tchunda Saib in their contest with their rivals for power. This success was, however, but a gleam of sunshine. Dupleix' plan of a Franco-Indian empire was shattered by the genius of Clive, and by the obtuseness and supineness of a government which did not realise its chances, and left its representative unsupported in the struggle with its more keen-sighted rival. It patched up an agreement with Great Britain, and recalled Dupleix (August 1754). This short-sighted policy has been severely indicted by patriotic Frenchmen. From their point of view it was craven and imbecile. "There is no example in modern history," concludes M. Martin, "of a nation betrayed to such a degree by its government. It is the ideal of ignominy. To find an instance so disgraceful one must go back to those cowardly potentates of the East, who abdicated their thrones at a mere gesture of the Roman proconsuls."[1]

Scarcely had an arrangement been patched together in India than hostilities broke out in North America. It seemed as if the law of nature had decreed war between Britain and France in North America. France owned vast territories in Canada and Louisiana was, in truth, territorially the predominant power. These territories were, however, but thinly populated by French colonists, who numbered about fifty thousand. The British colonies on the Atlantic seaboard had, on the other hand, a population of over a million white settlers. In the race for predominance the fifty thousand must inevitably succumb to the million, if Frenchman and Briton could not agree to live in amity as neighbours. Unfortunately for France the million represented the expansive energy of the British people, and it was evident that these colonies could not in the long run be contained on the eastern side of the Alleghanies. Expansion westward was their striving and their destiny, and France could no more restrain this expansion than she could stem the mighty Atlantic tide. They would, sooner or later, dispute the possession of the Ohio and the Mississippi valleys (were, in fact, already

[1] Histoire de France, xv. 464.

tentatively disputing it), which France claimed as its territory, and by which it hoped to link Canada and Louisiana in a great North American colonial empire.[1] This antagonism of policy and interest was aggravated by the dispute over the boundaries of Acadia, or Nova Scotia, ceded by France to Britain in 1713, and Canada respectively. Though Acadia was equivalent to the region extending far inland towards the St Lawrence, the French held that only the peninsula had been ceded. This boundary question was not definitely settled by the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, and skirmishes between French and British colonists resulted from French encroachment on the isthmus, which was by cession undoubtedly British territory (1750). Three years later Washington crossed the Alleghanies into the Ohio valley to establish posts for the Ohio Company founded in 1749. To check such intrusion the French had erected Fort Duquesne on the spot where Pittsburg now stands, and Washington was compelled to retreat. A second attempt in the following year, 1754, was equally fruitless, Washington being overtaken in his retreat and compelled to capitulate at Fort Necessity in the Alleghanies. The British Government thereupon sent General Braddock with a small British-American force to expel the French. Braddock met with still more crushing disaster. His little army was ambushed and routed near Fort Duquesne, and the general himself mortally wounded (9th July 1755). As a set-off to this disaster General Johnson defeated a French force near Lake George, and another expedition captured the French forts on the isthmus and mainland of Acadia. British squadrons had, too, been busy making prizes of French shipping and men-of-war in the Atlantic, thereby inflicting damage estimated at thirty millions of francs, and capturing several thousand French sailors, marines, and soldiers.[2] These events strained the relations of the two governments, which had meanwhile been exchanging angry representations, to breaking point. The farce of negotiation was kept up till the early summer of 1756, when it gave place to the formal rupture of peace between the two nations.[3]

The British had taken time by the forelock on the other side of the Atlantic. They allowed the French to deal the first blow on this side. The ostensible plan of the French government was to avenge the insult to French honour on the soil of England itself. The ruse was successful. While the British government, in expectation of an invasion, was exerting itself to provide for the defence of its shores,

[1] See Vie Privée, iii. 53, 54.

[2] *Ibid.*, iii. 61, 62.

[3] The declaration of war on the part of Britain is dated 4th May 1756, on the part of France 9th June (see Isambert, xxii. 265-267).

Marshal Richelieu set sail, on the 10th April 1756, from the roads of Hyères for Minorca, with an army of 12,000 men on board a large fleet of transports, under the escort of a squadron commanded by M. de la Galissonière. In the end of April Fort Philip, commanding Port Mahon, was invested. Blakeney, the British commander, held stubbornly out in the hope of relief from Admiral Byng. This hope was disappointed, for Byng was worsted in an engagement with Galissonière (20th May), and compelled to retire to Gibraltar. On the 27th June Richelieu executed the bold and dangerous, but brilliant operation of storming the well-nigh impregnable fortress, and compelled the garrison to yield on the following day.[1] This dramatic success threw all France into a delirium of joy.[2] It was heightened by good news from North America. Almost simultaneously with the despatch of the expedition against Minorca, M. de Montcalm sailed with reinforcements on board a small squadron under M. Beaussier to assume the offensive in Canada. Notwithstanding the numerical superiority of the British, with the resources of a number of thriving colonies at their back, the operations directed by Montcalm resulted in the capture by the French of several frontier forts, among them the important fort of Oswego, with 1,600 men and a large number of cannon. Never did struggle commence under more apparently favourable auspices from the military point of view. In the heated imaginations of the Parisians, so susceptible to the momentary emotions begotten by stunning feats of arms, France was to regain its naval supremacy, extend its colonial empire, and predominate in Europe, all in a breath. "The resources of the treasury," said M. de Moras, the minister of finance, who succeeded Sechelles in March 1756,[3] to the king, "are, according to my calculations, good for four years of war."[4] The sequel was speedily to prove that France and its controller-general were the victims of delusion. Notwithstanding the feats of Richelieu and Montcalm, it was involved in a struggle without a monarch of heroic sentiments to fire or maintain its enthusiasm, without generals to inspire its armies, and without the financial resources necessary to sustain successfully the burden of a long conflict with the greatest naval and the greatest military power of Europe. Meanwhile, Louis XV. sought to strengthen the offensive power of France by a combination which reversed the system of alliances of the previous hundred years. He was as fond of the game of international politics as he was of the game of

[1] Voltaire, Siècle de Louis XV., 135, 136.
[2] D'Argenson, ix. 295 *et seq.*, and Barbier.
[3] See *ibid.*, ix. 232.
[4] Vie Privée, iii. 72, 73.

cards, and he brought to bear on it the resources of the art of mystification, which he loved to display at the card table. The only part of his work that gave him real pleasure was to start the court and the world on a false scent.[1] He maintained a secret correspondence with his special envoys and secret agents, unknown even to his ministers. The correspondence shows us the best side of Louis XV., and it is a relief to be able to say of such a sorry mortal that he had a best side. His chief confidant in these matters, up to 1756, was the Prince of Conti. After the decline of Conti's influence, Tercier, the principal clerk at the foreign office, became the medium of these mysterious communications. Not even Madame de Pompadour was allowed the gratification of satisfying the curiosity which these furtive interviews aroused, though she now and then attempted to draw her paramour. While the secret correspondence reveals an unexpected energy in the apathetic monarch, it cannot be said that this energy, judged by the results of this war, was well directed. The theory of the causes of that war which has done duty in innumerable histories has proved to be a mere assumption. Duclos would have us believe that the diplomatic revolution which made France and Austria allies against Prussia and Great Britain was mainly the result of the co-operation of the resentments of Maria Theresa and Madame de Pompadour—was, in short, the fruit of a boudoir intrigue.[2] Maria hated Frederick as the despoiler of her territory, and schemed even to the length of cultivating the goodwill of Louis' mistress in complimentary, nay, even affectionate epistles. Madame de Pompadour hated him because he indulged in some cynical witticisms at her expense. This is true enough. It is not true that merely because they hated Frederick, Louis XV. forsook the alliance with Prussia for an alliance with the hereditary enemy of France. The motives of this alliance were political rather than personal, though the influence of Madame de Pompadour and her creatures, M. de Rouillé, minister of foreign affairs, and the Abbé de Bernis, doubtless helped to turn the scales in favour of the Austrian alliance. As a matter of policy, in view of the inevitable rupture with Great Britain, Louis took into serious consideration the offer of a treaty of friendship by Count Kaunitz, the Austrian ambassador at Versailles, but this treaty, in its initiatory stages at least, was not hostile to Prussia. It merely contemplated the guarantee of each other's territory on the basis of that of Aix-la-Chapelle, and that of Prussia was, on the insistence of Louis XV., to be included in the guarantee. There is no trace here of an arrangement hostile to Frederick initiated by

[1] See, for instance, D'Argenson, iii. 48. [2] *Ibid.*, ix. 279.

Maria Theresa and Madame de Pompadour. Nor does the assertion that Frederick had offered his alliance to Louis and been refused, rest on any better foundation. On the other hand, Frederick was actively negotiating a treaty of mutual assistance with Britain in case of the invasion of Germany by a third Power, and is said to have announced the transaction to the Duke of Nivernais, the French special envoy, in characteristically brusque fashion. The duke was a *littérateur* and a member of the French Academy. At the first audience Frederick asked him to recite some of his verses. The duke having recited, the saturnine monarch said, with a laugh, "I will presently show you a piece of my composition." The piece turned out to be the Treaty of Westminster, whose conclusion in June 1756 gave an impulse to the negotiations between Versailles and Vienna. It was then that the coquetry between Maria Theresa and Madame de Pompadour helped to influence the trend of events, and in the following May the celebrated and fateful Austro-French alliance was a *fait accompli*. Even this agreement, however, was not, in form at least, aggressive. Only in case of aggression by a third party, prospectively the King of Prussia, against either, were the allies to place at each other's disposal a force of 24,000 men (Treaty of Versailles, May 1756[1]).

The adhesion of Russia, Sweden, Saxony to the Austro-French alliance seemed to augur the speedy triumph of a combination which, for the first time since the advent of Louis XIV., gave to France the preponderance in auxiliaries over Great Britain. Frederick was, however, not the man to let himself be crushed. He had obtained by bribery indispensable evidence of the hostile combination which was being formed against him at Vienna, and he determined to forestall it by the invasion of Saxony in September 1756. He seized Dresden, surrounded the Saxon army at Pirna, checked the advance of the Austrian Marshal Browne at Lobositz, compelled the Saxons to capitulate, and in defence of his action exposed the conspiracy, of which he was to be the victim, by the publication of official documents, seized in the archives of Dresden. The tactics of Frederick likewise proclaimed to a shuddering world that the man who had precipitated the War of the Austrian Succession was once more on the war-path, with more justification this time, but with awful portents of misery to the world in general and France in particular. At this stage, however, France seemed to have started on the win-

[1] For an account of these transactions and of Louis' secret diplomacy, see The King's Secret, being the Secret Correspondence of Louis XV. with his diplomatic agents from 1752 to 1774, by the Count de Broglie, i. 99-142.

ning side. It was the leader of a vast combination of forces—Austrian, Russian, Saxon, Swedish—with the ultimate co-operation of Spain in reserve, and the neutrality and friendship of Denmark assured.

The fact that the administration of the army and navy as well as the kingdom was, at this juncture, given over entirely to the creatures of Madame de Pompadour did not, however, tend to enable France to reap the advantage of its superiority in the matter of allies. It was after the Damiens episode in January 1757 that the two most capable ministers, Count D'Argenson and M. Machault, were, at Madame's instigation, deprived of their posts as minister of war and marine respectively. "Your service," wrote Louis curtly to M. D'Argenson, "is no longer necessary to me. I order you to transmit your demission of the office of secretary for war, . . . . and to retire to your seat at Ormes."[1] M. Machault had been high in the favour of the mistress, but Louis, according to one report, piqued at the fact that Machault had been the spectator of his inconsistencies over the Damiens episode, insisted that he too must go,[2] and the mistress was forced to yield. In another and more trustworthy account he is represented as giving way in deference to the resentment of his mistress at the infidelity of Machault, who had consented to be the medium of the notice to quit. "They have teased me," wrote Louis to his favourite daughter and confidante, the Duchess of Parma, "till they have forced me to dismiss M. Machault, the man after my own heart. I shall never be comforted for this step."[3] Very characteristic of the man. Always helpless to do the right, though he knows it to be right. Their immediate successors were men of no weight. The war department was given to D'Argenson's nephew, the Marquis de Palmy, a weakling among the women, with a taste for literature, but little aptitude for business.[4] M. de Moras, of all men, added to his functions as controller-general those of minister of marine, Louis taking the seals himself and drawing the salary for his private benefit. Nor were great things to be hoped from the Abbé de Bernis, our poet abbé of a dozen years before, whose facile pen celebrated the beauty and the virtues of Pompadour on the occasion of her *début* as mistress. The abbé had since then been her mentor in politics, and though but a drawing-room politician, he was now suddenly pitchforked into the position of minister of foreign affairs, vacated by M. Rouillé (June 1757). Bernis, to his credit,

[1] Barbier, iv. 191.
[2] Mémoires de Baron Besenval, i. 208-214.
[3] Vie Privée, iv. 23.
[4] *Ibid.*, iii. 129.

was conscious of his incapacity, but in the midst of so many incapable colleagues, opined that he might take the consequences, and at least win the cardinal's hat before retiring.[1]

Such tyros would prove no match for a Frederick and a Pitt, if only Frederick and Pitt could bring their united strength properly to bear on the situation. The difficulty was to achieve the effective union of their genius in fighting the great combination against Britain and Prussia. The prejudice of George II. against Pitt threatened to thwart the effective co-operation. The Newcastle ministry, which had concluded the Treaty of Westminster, had been weakened by the desertion of Fox, and in November 1756 Newcastle was forced to resign. Pitt and Devonshire patched up a combination government, but the combination was very shaky. The king referred to Pitt and Temple as "those scoundrels." In a few months (April 1757) they were dismissed, and with their dismissal came the prospect of another incapable ministry under Newcastle. The stocks fell low. Great Britain seemed to be plunged into a great international conflict, with hardly an army, and, for the time being, without a government. British prestige, sapped by defeat abroad and something like anarchy at home, had declined below zero. For Frederick the outlook on this side was not promising. For France the day of reckoning with Great Britain seemed to have come. These sanguine expectations were decidedly deceptive, however. Unlike France, Great Britain was strong in the vigour of its body politic. It was wealthy and prosperous. Its financial administration was sound, though parliamentary corruption was flagrantly dominant under the auspices of Newcastle. French writers like D'Argenson and St Simon had noted the contrast between French and British fiscal administration, and envied the financial prosperity which their own incapable government, under a series of spendthrift absolute kings, was unable to imitate. True, the British army at this period was altogether inadequate for even the defence of the country, and Hessian and Hanoverian mercenaries had to be enlisted for this purpose. Its navy had sustained a humiliating reverse in the Mediterranean at the hands of La Galissonière. But it was a sufficient assurance of amendment in these respects that it possessed a Pitt, and that necessity at length forced George II., after three months of hesitation, to entrust the government again to the popular statesman, who became the all-powerful war minister of a second, and this time strong, coalition, of which Newcastle was the

[1] For a notice of Bernis see "The King's Secret," by the Duke de Broglie, who had access to his unpublished memoirs.

nominal head (June 1757).[1] Frederick might henceforth breathe freely as far as the energy of his ally was concerned. He was by far the greatest general, Pitt the greatest minister in Europe, compared with whom the creatures whom Madame de Pompadour stuck in office in the army and the government were, with some exceptions, mere cyphers in zeal, resource, and ability.

The concert of the British patriot and the Prussian general had come almost too late. During the campaign of 1757 Frederick beat the Austrians under Browne at Prague (May 1757), but was himself beaten disastrously six weeks later by Daun at Kolin, and forced to retreat into Saxony.[2] In Westphalia, where the French took the field under D'Estrées, the Duke of Cumberland was overwhelmed at Hastenbeck,[3] and forced to sign the Convention of Klosterseven, which placed his army altogether *hors de combat* and exposed Prussia to a French invasion. Another French army under Soubise was threatening it in Thuringia, whilst the Russians, Austrians, Swedes were moving from east, south, and north in an appalling concentration movement. From this death trap Frederick rescued himself by striking an overwhelming blow at Soubise at Rossbach, on the 5th November, which compelled both him and his colleague, Richelieu, who had replaced D'Estrées, to retreat. Then, turning swiftly eastwards, he smote the Austrians under Daun hip and thigh at Leuthen, a few days later (22nd November).[4] While disaster had overtaken the French army at Rossbach, fortune had been more favourable on the sea and in America. A formidable British squadron, under Mordaunt, failed in the attempt to take Rochefort. Another squadron, which carried a force of 11,000 men under General Loudon across the Atlantic to attack Louisburg, had no better success. On the coast of Africa and in the West Indian seas the French squadrons more than held their own. It looked as if nothing but a humiliating peace could save Britain from further disaster. The advent of Pitt in the midst of this critical emergency saved the situation for his country. Pitt exerted himself with brilliant results to stem the tide of ill luck. Ignoring the Convention of Klosterseven, he despatched a force of 12,000 men under the Duke of Marlborough to reinforce the army of Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick. He secured a subsidy of £670,000 to Frederick. He obtained from

[1] Lecky, History of England in the Eighteenth Century, ii. 462.

[2] See Histoire de la Guerre de Sept Ans, Œuvres Posthumes de Frederic II., iii. 155 and 168, 169.

[3] Guerre de Sept Ans, iii. 191, and Besenval, i. 40-53.

[4] *Ibid.*, iii. 212-222, 231-246.

Parliament permission to increase the naval and land forces. Let France henceforth look to her arsenals, her fleets, her armies, now that Pitt is full swing on the war-path, with an enthusiastic nation, a willing Parliament, abundance of money at his back, and a Frederick for ally at his side. It was at least very desirable to put the strongest men in responsible posts if, in face of the ominous activity of Pitt, Louis and his mistress were to persist in refusing Frederick's overtures of peace, and disposing their allies at Vienna and St Petersburg to hold on and try another campaign. Madame de Pompadour succeeded in intensifying the war fever, and attempted to win success in the field by recalling Richelieu, appointing the Comte de Clermont to succeed him, installing Belleisle over the war department, and despatching subsidies to Vienna, St Petersburg, Stockholm. These changes were considered masterpieces of statesmanship, but she neglected with fatal effect to look for a strong man to rule the navy, and pitted against Anson, as chief of the British Admiralty, such haphazard creatures as Berryer, lieutenant of police, who knew nothing about ships and armaments, but who had been of great service in upholding her power.

Apparatus enough was thus prepared to drench the soil of Germany with blood, and the grim business commenced once more with the victory of Prince Ferdinand over Clermont at Crefeld (22nd June 1758). This disaster finished the military career of Clermont, who had formerly been an abbé, but in whom the French army failed to recognise even a third-rate general. The soldiers, playing on his ecclesiastical rank, laughed at him as "General of the Benedictines."[1] When an aide-de-camp of the Prince of Condé came to inquire where the enemy was, "Look steadily," retorted the Count of St Germain, handing him a glass and pointing towards headquarters, "that is the spot where the enemy is."[2] Contades, Clermont's successor, partly retrieved the blunders of Madame's *protégé*, the quondam abbé, by a series of operations in co-operation with Soubise, which compelled Ferdinand to cross the Rhine, without, however, losing ground in Westphalia and Lower Saxony.[3]

Simultaneously Frederick had stolen through Silesia into Moravia, and swept down on Olmutz, for the purpose of placing Daun *hors de combat* before trying conclusions with Fermor and his Russians on the Oder. He failed to take Olmutz[4] or disable Daun, but by a rapid northern march down the Oder came upon Fermor at Zorndorf, defeated him, with great slaughter on both sides (28th August), and

[1] Barbier, iv. 252.
[2] Vie Privée, iii. 167.
[3] Guerre de Sept Ans, iii. 271-284.
[4] Guerre de Sept Ans., iii. 286-294.

drove him eastwards into Poland.[1] He then hurried into Saxony to check the advance of Daun in that region. His approach caused Daun to retire southwards up the Elbe as far as Hochkirchen, and here, in the misty darkness of the early morning of the 14th October, Frederick allowed himself to be surprised and disastrously beaten by his wary antagonist.[2] He had still vitality enough to hasten to the relief of Neisse, save Silesia from an Austrian conquest, and return to threaten Daun once more, and finally push him back into Bohemia.[3] Both parties were substantially, after all these marchings and slaughters, where they were before.

Seawards the energy of Pitt had begun to tell very disastrously for the French. Lord Anson was told that the new ships on the stocks, or about to be put on them, must be ready by a certain day on pain of impeachment. Merit was the only passport to promotion in army and navy. More troops and sailors were enlisted or pressed for service against the coast of France, on the Continent, in America. St Malo, Cherbourg were attacked, with much destruction of shipping, docks, fortifications, the French taking what revenge they could by a successful attack on a British force which had landed at St Cast, near St Malo (June–September 1758). M. de Moras, minister of marine, had no Pitt to threaten him with all manner of pains and penalties in case of neglect of duty. The French navy under his supervision was not half the size of that of its adversary. Pestilence at Brest thinned the ranks of its sailors by several thousands.[4] Money and men were equally scarce, genius non-existent. Accordingly, it stands to reason that henceforth the French squadrons will be sunk, dispersed, harried off the deep, and reinforcements for Canada soon be out of the question. There is, for instance, the squadron of M. de la Clue, caught by the British Mediterranean fleet, under Admiral Holbourne, *en route* from Toulon for Louisburg, before it got through the Straits of Gibraltar, and forced to seek refuge in Carthagena, and ultimately sneak back to Toulon. Then there is the disaster that befell the squadron of the Chevalier de Rohan and his convoy from Aix to America, the chevalier being taken by Admiral Hawke in the Bay of Biscay, and his mission summarily ended. Nevertheless, by dint of strategy, or the favour of fogs, dark nights, storms, etc., supplies and reinforcements in driblets, all too scanty, were carried across the Atlantic,[5] but no fleet

[1] Guerre de Sept Ans, iii. 304-311; Carlyle, History of Frederick II., bk. 18, ch. 13.

[2] Guerre de Sept Ans, iii. 320-326.

[3] *Ibid.*, iii. 326-340.

[4] Vie Privée, iii. 184.

[5] Vie Privée, iii. 187.

capable of coping with Admiral Boscawen, who ranged up in the beginning of June before Louisburg, existed in American waters. Admiral Beaussier was obliged to keep within the port, while Boscawen, disposing of a fleet of twenty-four ships of the line and eighteen frigates, landed from his transports 16,000 troops, under General Amherst, who laid siege to the town. The besieged held out for six weeks, animated to a stern resistance by the governor, M. de Drucourt, and his heroic wife, who took her place on the ramparts and fired the cannon with her own hands. M. Beaussier's ships being burned or taken, and the town and harbour swept by the fire of the besiegers, even heroism of this kind could not stand more than six weeks' siege, and surrendered. M. de Moras was no longer at the ministry of marine to bear his share of the blame, having meanwhile been succeeded (June 1758) by an insignificant marine officer, De Massiac, who for five months more gave such conspicuous proof of his incapacity that his name is not even mentioned in the royal almanac as the holder of this important office. On the 1st of November he was followed by the ex-lieutenant of police, Berryer—a change from bad to worse,—whose appointment set the Parisians asking whether it was not the set intention of the court to ruin the State by the shortest process possible. Louis XV., at any rate, was evidently no believer in experiments in naval reform. "You must be foolish, indeed," said he, at a later time, to M. Choiseul, who communicated to him his sanguine resolutions, on his *début* as minister of marine. "I have heard all the ministers of marine talk in that way at first, but not one of them ever made anything of it. Believe me, and renounce the notion of attempting anything of that kind."[1] Madame de Pompadour and Marshal Belleisle thought, however, that they had found in Berryer the very genius needful to carry out the naval part of a grand programme of invasion of Britain, of which the old marshal's dotard pate was full. M. Berryer tried a few trifling reforms. He consulted an old naval officer who had formerly been dismissed the service for misconduct, held many furtive interviews with this worthy for fear of the scandal of the thing, dealt out dismissions and reprimands in accordance with the sage advice of his mentor, and thereby succeeded in disorganising what little order and fighting power was left in that poor hulk of a navy.

Meanwhile Pitt, in pursuance of his forward policy, was busy with his plans of American conquest, inciting the British colonists to arm and organise, recalling General Loudon and substituting General Abercrombie as commander-in-chief, sending young and able officers

[1] Mémoires de Besenval, i. 236.

—Wolfe, Howe, Amherst—to support him, and fleets and transports more than sufficient for his purpose. The result of all which was, that besides the capture of Louisburg by Boscawen and Amherst, Fort Duquesne, and with it the valley of the Ohio, were conquered before the end of 1758, and only by the desperate resistance to Abercrombie's attack on Ticonderoga was Canada for the time being saved the fate of Louisiana. This fate was only prolonged, however. In vain did M. Vaudreuil, the governor, implore reinforcements. M. Berryer being busy with his *rôle* of pettyfogging reformer, and the sea being blocked and money scarce, Quebec could not be reinforced. Canada was left to do the best it could in the circumstances, with a British fleet and a British army under Wolfe threatening Quebec, in the summer of 1759, and other armies threatening Montreal, Niagara, and other points along the interior line of the St Lawrence. An attempt to destroy the British fleet before Quebec, by fireships, failed, but for three months the efforts of Wolfe to capture the fortress were fruitless, until at length he succeeded in landing his troops on the Heights of Abraham and completely defeating the army of Montcalm. The victory cost both commanders their lives, and France the possession of Canada. A last effort to retake Quebec only continued the despair of the Canadians, whom the mother country could no longer succour. Within less than a year Montreal shared the fate of Quebec, and its capitulation in September 1760 effaced the sovereignty of France from the North American continent, and transferred its vast possessions to British rule. This transaction was much to the relief of the embarrassed minister of marine, whom it relieved from urgent calls for help to which he was unable to respond.[1]

Montcalm had foreseen the loss of Canada in his own potential defeat. He consoled himself with the reflection that the British conquest of Canada would in ten years' time cost the victors the possession of New England and their other North American colonies. "This defeat will be worth more than a victory to my fatherland."[2] It certainly was the beginning of ultimate disaster for Britain in North America; it is not easy to see where the advantage to France ultimately came in.

In the home seas, too, there was one long tale of unmitigated disaster for France to record during the fateful year 1759. The advent of Choiseul as foreign minister, in place of Bernis, lent a new energy to the senile government of Louis and Pompadour.

[1] Vie Privée, iii. 183-249.

[2] See his letter to his cousin in Carlyle, History of Frederick, v. 557-559.

Belleisle's plan of invasion was galvanised into new life. England, Scotland, Ireland should behold the terrible spectacle of the invader in their midst. The loss of Canada should be paid for by the conquest of Great Britain itself. In Dunkirk, Brest, and Toulon the bolt was being forged in the shape of three considerable fleets which should escort the armies of invasion to their destination. Transports might be counted by the hundred, troops by the thousand (65,000 in all). Count Conflans at Brest, M. de la Clue at Toulon were making ready, while the Duke of Aiguillon, whose sphere of operations was to be Scotland, and Soubise, the prospective conqueror of England, were making ready too. Such were the heroes of this audacious undertaking—weak pillars indeed on which to rest such an Atlas weight of work. Mayhap the Dutch, the Russians, the Swedes, the Spaniards will lend a helping hand, if M. Choiseul's diplomacy can avail. M. Choiseul's diplomacy broke down in this direction, and in every other direction there was nothing but black disaster. To begin with, M. de la Clue never got the chance of co-operating. Boscawen turned up in June in the roads of Toulon to block or take his squadron. His intention was frustrated by the cannon of the forts, and he retired to Gibraltar to refit. Then M. de la Clue, waiting till he was far out of sight, ventured out, crept timidly by night (16th-17th August) through the Straits to find himself denuded by accident and bad manœuvring of five out of his dozen ships, and his antagonist upon him off Lagos, and his squadron either dispersed or taken, in spite of the brave defence made by M. de Sabran—a culmination which put M. de la Clue and his ships henceforth completely out of the reckoning.

Still worse fared M. de Conflans, although a storm, which drove Admiral Hawke to seek refuge at Plymouth, provided him with an opportunity of attempting something. When at length he started on the 15th November to go and pick up the Duke of Aiguillon, it was only to run amuck of Hawke off Belleisle, put about, and, after exchanging a few broadsides, run into the rocky and narrow waters off the shore of Quiberon. Here most of his ships were taken, sunk, or forced to run aground by his intrepid pursuer, who followed, be the risk what it might. Only the small Dunkirk squadron, under Thurot, an officer of Irish extraction, reached its destination, took Carrickfergus, but was then taken in turn, and its leader killed (February 1760). The plan of invasion was thus shattered, and with it the French fleet for many a day to come.[1]

From the east, too, rolled the tide of almost unceasing disaster.

[1] Vie Privée, iii. 213-226, 241-246.

India, like Canada, was gone or going from the grasp of France. At first there was considerable hope of retaining its hold there, and even of loosening that of its rival. In 1756 Surajah Dowlah drove the British out of Bengal, and gave a tragic colouring to the feat by the atrocity of the Black Hole of Calcutta. What was loss to British influence was so much gain to French influence, if Bussi could help it. Bussi had, however, a potent antagonist in Clive, who was back from England at Madras, and did not lose a day in avenging the shades of his suffocated countrymen. Admiral Watson's fleet and a small mixed army of 2,500 men under Clive recaptured Calcutta, and obliged the Nabob to renew the privileges of the East India Company and make compensation (January–February 1757). With the perfidy characteristic of Indian politicians, native and European alike, Clive then turned his arms against the French settlement of Chandernagor, and forced it to capitulate. This was the last of the French in Bengal, for Surajah Dowlah was soon rendered impotent to enable them to return. He had naturally sought to evade the conditions of the treaty with Clive by intriguing with the French rivals of the English Company, and Clive, furnished with this pretext, and himself fomenting rebellion against his authority, attacked and defeated his 60,000 warriors with nine hundred Europeans and a couple of thousand Sepoys at Plassey (23rd June 1757). With Meer Jaffier as new Nabob, and Clive's creature, British supremacy in Bengal was unquestionable. It was likewise soon to be so in Madras, where Lally, son of an Irish refugee officer in France, had been placed in the breach by the French government at this critical juncture (April 1758). Lally brought with him some reinforcements, and a respectable squadron under D'Ache. An advantageous engagement between it and a British squadron under Pocock, who was forced to abandon the design of relieving Fort St David, enabled Lally to prosecute the siege of this fortress to a favourable conclusion in June 1758. Arcot was taken, too, but Tanjore resisted his determined efforts to besiege it into surrender, and the French squadron being defeated in a second engagement and compelled to retire to Mauritius, he was fain to give up the attempt. In addition to this misfortune to his arms, he alienated by his impolitic harshness the sympathies of the natives, and disgusted by his aggressive reforming spirit the officials of the French Company and his own subordinates. Worse still, he made the mistake of recalling Bussi from the Deccan, and thus practically abandoning the field to the enterprise of his antagonists there. Nevertheless, he determined on the reduction of Madras in December 1758, and

might have succeeded had not disaffection and discouragement among his subordinates cramped his operations, and Admiral Pocock not thrown in a timely reinforcement (February 1759). He was forced to raise the siege, and return to Pondicherry to experience a series of crushing disasters. He was abandoned a second time by D'Ache, who had returned from Mauritius and ventured another unsuccessful engagement with Pocock, and after the decisive victory gained by Coote at Wandewash (January 1760) and the reduction of the French posts in the Carnatic, was besieged in his turn, and finally driven to capitulate on the conqueror's terms (16th January 1761).

The surrender of Pondicherry was the knell of French empire in India. That it came to this was largely the fault of the miserable government of Louis XV., which, hampered by a great war at home and dead to the vast interests at stake across the ocean, left Lally to struggle without adequate support and to reap to the full the fruit of the mistakes which his courage did not avail to rectify. Significant it is of the utter want of public spirit on the part of this government that one after another of its most able and energetic servants in Indian enterprise—La Bourdonnais, Dupleix, Lally—was disgraced and ruined for the merit of seeking to build up a French empire. La Bourdonnais was thrown into the Bastille. Dupleix died of vexation at the dishonour heaped upon him by the creature of Madame de Pompadour. Lally was dragged to the scaffold in a common cart and beheaded.[1]

In the West Indies the tide of conquest was running with equal force in favour of Great Britain. Guadaloupe and St Dominica were already gone. Martenico and the rest of the Windward Islands, Cayenne, etc., were about to follow.[2]

From these facts we may judge how matters stood at home. The branches were falling because the trunk was rotten. Cardinal Bernis' expedient—to conclude peace—was the only feasible one after Rossbach and Crefeld, after the French generals, like the French admirals, had given conclusive proof that they could not fight, and that fighting meant only loss of men, money, reputation. This was too disagreeable a verity for Madame de Pompadour to admit. To make peace would not be to hand her name on to posterity as the heroine of France and the generous friend of Maria Theresa. She had, moreover, still in hand the task of making a hero of Soubise and

[1] The author of the Vie Privée, like other contemporary historians, is unjust to Lally, whose reputation was vindicated in 1778 by the reversal of the sentence.

[2] Vie Privée, iii. 206-281, 249-269.

other creatures of her goodwill. Soubise must win a battle if France perish for it. Bernis, who would no longer bear the responsibility of humouring his patroness in this fashion, was ordered to retire to his abbey of St Medard after having supped one evening with his embarrassed majesty. Madame de Pompadour provided a successor in the Count de Stainville, and this time her nominee had undoubtedly considerable ability and experience of affairs, did, in fact, lend some portion of *éclat* to this government of fourth-rate men. The count had cultivated Madame even to the extent of making himself the agent of a mean intrigue. A relation of his—an engaging beauty—had attracted the eye of the Sultan of Versailles, who would forthwith have her in his harem—not simply in the Parc aux Cerfs, but, it was to be feared, in the vacant apartment of Madame de Pompadour. Stainville had got ear of the intrigue which threatened Madame's position, and might easily have made it a lever to overthrow the official sultana and advance his own fortune by means of his relative. He preferred the surer method of using it to ingratiate himself with the mistress in power, rather than hazard the experiment of helping a new one into her place. He accordingly got hold of the king's letter to his relative soliciting an interview, and putting it into his pocket, as if to reflect on the answer, carried it straightway to Madame de Pompadour, who understood how to turn the revelation to account by throwing the blame of the discovery on the innocent object of the king's passion, and thereby discrediting her in the royal eyes. Stainville had the embassy at Rome and then at Vienna, and now (November 1758) the ministry of foreign affairs and the Duchy of Choiseul as his reward. So, at least, say the anecdotists, among them Madame du Hausset, who is probably an authentic reporter.[1]

Choiseul must be allowed comparative greatness. He was a great minister under Louis XV.; he would have been mediocrity in the best days of Louis XIV. He grasped the helm at the right moment for his reputation. Affable in the highest degree, very finely mannered and most elegant, vivacious, self-confident, seductive, insinuating, he was just the man to shine as courtier and diplomatist under such a *régime*. He was wanting in solidity and stability, however, being ready to sacrifice a friend or ignore a promise in the attainment of his purpose. He had some ideas, big ideas, considering the smallness of the times, but he had no love of detail, and could not, therefore, be a great minister. He was very jealous of possible rivals, full of himself, but harmless in his dislikes, resent-

[1] Mémoires, 82; Vie Privée, iii. 228-230.

ment being as good as non-existent for him. While he flared up at times in regular French style, he was placable to a degree in spite of the nasty habit of saying biting things even of his friends in his hasty moods. This spasmodic hastiness made him many enemies. Frederick called him *un fou plein d'esprit* (a fool full of intellectuality), but Frederick was not a fair critic after suffering a beating, which Choiseul did his utmost to administer. Finally, he was inaccessible to advice, but was very easily led by the ladies.[1]

Choiseul made his *début* by confirming (30th December 1758) the treaty of 1756, and putting on the shoulders of a much-to-be-pitied controller-general the task of continuing to furnish to Maria Theresa a subsidy which, though reduced by one-half, was still a terrible problem for M. de Boullogne (Moras' successor, August 1757) to solve, especially as he had to subsidise the Swedes and the Saxons, and maintain 100,000 men in Germany, in addition to 24,000 placed at the disposal of the Austrian sovereign.[2] M. de Boullogne was, moreover, expected to pay for the invasion of Great Britain and other plans of the brilliant Choiseul, who, by universal consent, is a genius in the conception of great projects. The controller-general could not rise to the elevation of so versatile a genius, and succumbed after floundering in the quagmire of loans, *dons gratuits* from all the towns and burghs of the kingdom, extraordinary affairs, lotteries,[3] etc. The result of this floundering was an enormous deficit in the estimates, which for the year 1759 were set down at 285 millions of livres, while the prospective expenditure bulked at 418 millions. In reality the expenditure came to over 500 millions, and M. de Boullogne, seeing the rocks ahead, wisely turned aside into the haven of retirement in favour of M. de Silhouette (March 1759). M. de Silhouette had a great reputation for virtue, for the faculties of application and observation, as a traveller, a writer on morality, philosophy, finance, administration in general, as a councillor of the Parliament of Metz and master of requests, as a member of various other fraternities, as chancellor to the Duke of Orleans and commissary of the East India Company.[4] If Silhouette but wave his wand, everything must turn into gold. The first flourishes were promising. At one stroke he raised 72,000,000 on the farms-general (72,000 shares at 1,000 livres each, the shareholders to receive half the receipts of the farms-general).[5] This was hard on the farmers-

[1] See Mémoires de Besenval, i. 216-223.
[2] See treaty in Guerre de Sept Ans, iii. 352-358.
[3] See Isambert, xxii. 274, 279, and Bailly, Hist. Fin., ii. 136-141.
[4] Vie Privée, iii. 233.
[5] Isambert, xxii. 291.

general, but the public applauded a measure tending to fleece the race of fiscal oppressors, who rioted in luxury while hunger was haunting the peasant's hut. It applauded again when Silhouette abolished the exemptions from the *taille* (with some exceptions), and attenuated the pension list.[1] He would not even spare the king at a time when patriotism demanded an example of sacrifice. Let Louis refrain from gambling, and give the money thus wasted to the public treasury. Tragic prospect! Louis deprived of the privilege of engaging in the only occupation which made life worth living! Choiseul gallantly came to the rescue, and took the burden on the charges of the foreign office.[2] Louis might, therefore, continue to gamble with the taxpayer's money, while the taxpayer had not a single loaf left in his cupboard. The cutting down of the pension list similarly remained a mere paper reform. There was no cessation in the issue of *acquits de comptant*, which had by this time reached the total of 117 millions annually—much of it spent in payment of disgraceful objects—in spite of the spirited remonstrances of the Chamber of Accounts. "Your majesty cannot sufficiently distrust those who, in order to satiate their devouring hunger of your gifts, magnify in your eye the opulence of the people. The zeal of your subjects is inexhaustible; but their resources no longer correspond with their zeal."[3] The king would not sacrifice his pleasures, but he sent his plate to the mint,[4] and everybody of any importance of course did the same. Reform and self-sacrifice, which do not probe deeper than this, did not save M. Silhouette from the necessity of falling back on extortion, like his predecessors. A general subvention,[5] or income-tax, from which, as on the lines of Machault's financial policy, there was to be no exemption, taxes on luxury, creation of charges, duties on shops, increased duties on foreign merchandise, on all articles of consumption, in short a regular shower of edicts—some just, more unjust—fairly took away the breath of Parliament and nation.[6] Then came a shout of indignation from one end of France to the other. The privileged classes shouted on behalf of their privileges, the over-burdened taxpayer in protest against the new impositions on his income and his bread, the Parliament in the name of the fundamental laws of the kingdom, in virtue of which no decree could become law without the *imprimatur* of its free suffrage.[7] The

[1] Isambert, xxii. 284-288.

[2] See Monthion, Particularités sur les Ministres des Finances in Bailly, ii. 141, 142.

[3] Bailly, ii. 143, 144.

[4] Isambert, xxii. 296.

[5] *Ibid.*, xxii. 293.

[6] Vie Privée, iii. 235.

[7] See Bailly, ii. 145, 146.

Parliament was, as usual, browbeaten by a *lit de justice*, but the pressure of public opinion was so strong that Louis hesitated to brave the nation by enforcing the edict. As against the nation, the throne, it is evident, has now become the weaker party. Silhouette was beaten into retreat, and in his desperation suspended the payment of the State obligations to the creditors, except in the case of the *rentes*. "To suspend payment of the *rentes*," which were held by so large a proportion of the nation, warned Choiseul, "would be to conjure revolution." This was a serious blow to the national credit and commerce, and there was general execration of Silhouette, in whose dishonour people made portraits *à la Silhouette*—in the blackest of colours, that is—and breeches *à la Silhouette*, without pockets.[1] Henceforth Silhouette was impossible, and was replaced by Lieutenant-of-police Bertin (November 1759), who discarded some of the objectionable edicts, modified others, established a third twentieth, doubled, and even trebled, the capitation tax, and ultimately negotiated the assent of Parliament to his measures (March 1760).[2] To tide over immediate embarrassment, the Prince of Conti came to the rescue with a large loan to the State.[3]

Though the campaign of 1759 on the Continent was a disastrous one for Frederick, it brought little advantage to the arms of Louis. The attempt of Prince Ferdinand to dislodge the French army under the Duke de Broglie, from Frankfurt, was indeed frustrated by his defeat at Bergen (13th April 1759).[4] Prince Ferdinand more than balanced this reverse by his victory over Broglie and Contades at Minden, which was rendered more decisive by the friction between his two antagonists. Contades accused Broglie of dilatoriness, and insinuated the most unworthy of motives on the part of his colleague, viz., envy and the desire to discredit and supplant him. The victory of Bergen was a sufficient answer to the accusation of bad generalship, and from the graver charge Broglie was exculpated by the council, and nominated marshal and general-in-chief in place of Contades. His appointment did not bring a reversal of the ill-luck which gradually rolled the French back along the Weser and the Fulda into Hesse Cassel. The secret of this ill-luck, the new marshal discovered, was the inefficiency of the French army. "It is simply total ignorance on the part of all, from the sub-lieutenant to the lieutenant-general, of the duties of their calling, and of all the details into which they ought to enter."[5] Broglie believed that he

[1] Vie Privée, iii. 236. [2] *Ibid.*, iv. 63, 64. [3] Bailly, ii. 147.
[4] Guerre de Sept Ans, iv. 5-7; King's Secret, i. 292-298.
[5] King's Secret, i. 303.

could change this state of affairs, and the army believed it too. "Marshal," said a soldier, "the army has now a general; if it is beaten it will be the fault of the soldiers."[1] Beaten it was in spite of Broglie, and by December we find him at the point from which he set out in spring—back at Frankfurt, with all the advantages gained in the earlier part of the campaign lost to his enemy.[2]

This ignorance the war minister, Belleisle, was exerting himself to counteract, by passing ordinances to debar any one from purchasing a regiment, without having so much as borne a sword, and to teach the manly virtues to the coxcomb officers, whose chief occupation was eating, drinking, gambling, and shining among the women.[3]

On his side Frederick had been striving hard, this campaign, to hinder, as before, the concentration of the Austrians and the Russians. The attempt involved him in a series of terrible reverses. His lieutenant, Wedel, was beaten at Züllichau by Soltikov (24th June 1759), who advanced to the Oder and threatened Berlin. In hastening to the rescue, Frederick himself suffered a still more overwhelming disaster at Kunersdorf, where Soltikov and Laudon almost annihilated his army (12th August). Though he gathered another army and manœuvred Daun into retreating out of Saxony into Bohemia, Dresden was forced to capitulate, and two of his subsidiary forces were compelled to surrender at Maxen and Meissen.[4] In these unpropitious circumstances, and his treasury being empty, he essayed negotiations, and sent a secret envoy, Edelsheim, to Paris to propose terms. He exhorted Pitt to follow his example, and Pitt made overtures for the meeting of a congress. Nothing came of these negotiations. Frederick's envoy was thrown into the Bastille as a proof to the cabinet of Vienna that France had no intention of playing false. Pitt was probably not sincere in his overtures. The time had gone past when he would have been content to see France on its knees. He was determined, he haughtily said, to lay it on its back, and to prosecute the struggle until he could dictate the terms of the master.[5]

While Frederick improved his position against tremendous odds by the victories of Liegnitz and Torgau, during the campaign of 1760,[6] the French could congratulate themselves on various successes,

[1] King's Secret, i. 357.
[2] See Guerre de Sept Ans, iv. 9-20.
[3] See Vie Privée, iv. 1-6; see also Isambert, xxii. 275 *et seq.*
[4] Guerre de Sept Ans, iii. 352 *et seq.*, and iv. 25 *et seq.*
[5] For these negotiations see Guerre de Sept Ans, iv. 66-79.
[6] See Guerre de Sept Ans, iv. 81-176.

which enabled Broglie, with greatly superior numbers,[1] to recover from Prince Ferdinand part of the ground lost in western Germany during the preceding campaign. The successful engagement at Korbach was a small affair compared with the terrible conflicts farther east, but it was inflated by Parisian society into a great victory, and was in the circumstances something to be thankful for. "All Paris is running to the Hôtel de Broglie to congratulate the dowager maréchale." "Would have done honour to the greatest generals of past times,"[2] exclaimed Belleisle to the king. He suffered two reverses in the sequel, however, one at Emsdorf and another at Warburg, also of no great moment. Nevertheless, he continued to press back Prince Ferdinand, who detached a division under the hereditary Prince of Brunswick, to make a diversion towards the Lower Rhine, and ease the strain on Hanover. This movement was checked by De Castries' victory at Kloster Kampen (16th October 1760). Ferdinand then tried to win back lost ground by a winter campaign, compelled Broglie to retire on Frankfurt once more, but failing to take Cassel, was in turn forced to retreat before the renewed advance of his antagonist with a reinforced army, after the defeat of the hereditary prince at Grünberg.[3] Broglie had thus had his turn of success and reverse, but had in reality done nothing to merit either the exaggerated eulogiums or the supercilious criticism of which he was alternately the object. He silenced insubordinate critics in the army by dismissing Count St Germain and the Marquis D'Argenson. Thereupon criticism in high places waxed very indignant, and obtained the ascendant at the ministry of war and in Madame de Pompadour's boudoir.[4] Madame was burning for another chance to get Soubise to shine. Choiseul, who resigned the ministry of foreign affairs in favour of his cousin, the Duke de Praslin, and succeeded Belleisle at the war office early in 1761, humoured the omnipotent mistress, and divided the command of the army beyond the Rhine between Broglie and Soubise. The transaction was not creditable to Choiseul's sagacity, and the result was disastrous. The two commanders were jealous of each other, and did not co-operate heartily in the movement which was designed to overwhelm Prince Ferdinand. Their forces were vastly superior, but their tactics in the attack at Vellingshausen (16th July 1761) were disjointed, and the consequence was a crushing defeat, though the numbers were almost two for the French to one for their opponents. The two marshals

[1] Carlyle, History of Frederick, book xx. 29.
[2] King's Secret, i. 358, 359.
[3] Méms. de Besenval, i. 76-96.
[4] King's Secret, i. 362.

separated in a towering passion, and the conquest of Hanover in lieu of Canada and India, was further off than ever.[1]

Still worse, this spring saw France itself invaded by a British force which captured Belleisle, while British squadrons were busy taking what remained of French colonies. Pitt was still dictator of British politics, though George II. had died in the previous October. An inkling of the truth of Frederick's remark to the Marquis D'Argens was at length beginning to dawn on the sorry government of Louis and Pompadour. "These fools will lose Canada and Pondicherry to please the Queen of Hungary and the czarina." Choiseul accordingly tried negotiations for himself and his allies, suggesting a congress to settle a general peace, an expedient approved by Pitt and Frederick,[2] and discussing separate terms of accommodation with Great Britain. Neither expedient proved effective, but meanwhile the *Pacte de Famille* (Family Compact) between the courts of Versailles and Madrid, united France and Spain in an offensive alliance (15th August 1761), to take effect from May 1762, if the war lasted. Fresh prey to devour, thinks Pitt gleefully, and more schemes of aggrandisement for the purpose of incorporating the colonial possessions of Spain in a mighty British empire, whirl through that fertile, ambitious brain. The conflict was thus to widen instead of shrinking, and Choiseul, who added the ministry of marine to that of war (October 1761), was working night and day to prepare for the death struggle. Patriotic gifts—offers of ships by Provincial Estates, municipal corporations, chambers of commerce, offers of money from others—furnished the sinews of war.[3]

For Frederick things were not looking well, especially as Pitt, who was forced to resign in October 1761 in the face of the opposition of George III., now failed him, and Bute, his successor, as director of British policy, was no Pitt. No more subsidies for Frederick, for whom, in aggravation of the situation, the campaign of 1761 had been very disastrous.[4] Yet there was some fight left in him, and actually over 100,000 men were still gathered by desperate efforts to his standard in the spring of 1762, and, miracle of fortune, the death of the Czarina Elizabeth (5th June 1762), was more than a counterpoise to the demission of Pitt. Czar Peter III. was an enthusiastic admirer of the Prussian hero, and not only withdrew his alliance from the Queen of Hungary, but placed a Russian corps at

[1] Guerre de Sept Ans, iv. 261-271; King's Secret, i. 371-387.
[2] *Ibid.*, iv. 193-200.
[3] Vie Privée, iv. 14, 15; Besenval, i. 236-239.
[4] Guerre de Sept Ans, iv. 200-261.

Frederick's disposal (May 1762).[1] In these halcyon circumstances, success returned to his standard, and the battle of Freyberg (29th October 1762), which was followed by an armistice to last till 1st March 1763,[2] put an end to the struggle in this quarter. Prince Ferdinand, too, had been excelling this campaign against Soubise, plus D'Estrées, who replaced Broglie, beating and manœuvring his antagonists, strengthened though they were by the Prince of Condé and the army of the Lower Rhine, out of Hesse and back towards Frankfurt (battles of Wilhelmstadt and Amoenaburg, 24th June and 21st September 1762). Equally unlucky and resultless was the Franco-Spanish invasion of Portugal, where a British force, in co-operation with the Portuguese, rolled back the invaders, while British squadrons seized Cuba and the Philippine Islands.

At last, at last, diplomacy took the place of the sword, and infinite negotiation rounded off these seven years of brutal strife. Diplomacy except on the British side, had singularly little to show by way o advantageous result. France was forced to pay a terrible bill to Britain in the sacrifice of a large portion of her colonial possessions —Canada and the left bank of the Ohio and the Mississippi, several West Indian Islands, Senegal on the coast of Africa,—surrendered Minorca, and renounced the competition for the predominance in India, where Pondicherry was restored to her. She renounced, too to Spain Louisiana to the west of the Mississippi, as compensation for Florida, which Spain ceded to Britain (Peace of Paris, 10th February 1763). Her sacrifices for the sake of the House of Habsburg Lorraine in Germany were wholly futile. Frederick retained Silesia and the enormous expenditure of treasure and blood on the side o the allies left no trace in territorial changes on the map of Europe (Peace of Hubertusburg, 13th February 1763). Germany had suffered carnage and ravage almost comparable with those of the Thirty Years War; nearly a million of men[3] had been destroyed in order that the diplomatists might simply conclude to return to the *status quo ante bellum*. The lack of active co-operation on the part of the allies chiefly served to preserve Prussia, which could not have successfully resisted so powerful a combination, had its whole weight been thrown against her with energetic precision, from annihilation. The co-operation of France was lamed by bad generalship and by the naval struggle with Britain. It was indeed a fatuous policy that mingled in a quarrel from which France could derive little advantage, and which rendered it impossible to prosecute with adequate vigour that

[1] Guerre de Sept Ans, iv. 273-302. [2] *Ibid.*, iv. 304-387.
[3] *Ibid.*, iv. 414, 415.

on which its true interests depended.[1] At the end of the struggle it was France, not Prussia, that was threatened with destruction. It seemed as if its government had ruined it irretrievably. Apart from territorial losses, the economic disorganisation was appalling. The navy was well-nigh destroyed, ninety-three ships having been sunk or taken by its enemy.[2] Choiseul had laboured to restore it, but French shipbuilders, it was well said, merely worked to increase the British navy.[3] Her substance was consumed by frightful and aimless expenditure, her prestige in the dust, her prosperity for the time being paralysed, and a weight of debt accumulated which was to prove permanently hopeless. Truly the remaining milestones to the Revolution are now few in number.

SOURCES OF THIS CHAPTER.—Isambert, Recueil, xxii.; Journals of D'Argenson and Barbier; Voltaire, Siècle de Louis XV.; Broglie, The King's Secret, being the Secret Correspondence of Louis XV. with his Diplomatic Agents from 1752 to 1774; Vie Privée de Louis XV.; Martin, Histoire de France, xv.; Mémoires de Baron Besenval (Barrière); Histoire de la Guerre de Sept Ans in Œuvres Posthumes de Frederic II.; Carlyle, Frederick the Great; Lecky, History of England, vol. ii.; Mémoires de Madame du Hausset; Bailly, Histoire Financière.

[1] See the sagacious remarks of Frederick on this subject, Guerre de Sept Ans, iv. 411-413.

[2] Vie Privée, iv. 15.

[3] Voltaire, Siècle de Louis XV., 157.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### VOLTAIRE, APOSTLE OF RATIONALITY AND HUMANITY.

THE eighteenth century has been called "the century of ideas." In fertile intellectual activity it deserves the distinction, at least in contrast to preceding centuries. It was a time of intellectual quickening which produced an energy of speculation, criticism, discussion, embracing the whole complex of man's existence. Politics, philosophy, theology, sociology, history, art, science, literature, became the subjects of keen debate. The intellectual horizon widened, and human life was subjected to a searching and even passionate analysis. The spirit of the Renascence seems to revel in the full strength of all its possible tendencies. The mind threw off the shackles which had hitherto cramped its expansion in some directions and frustrated the comprehensive exercise of all its energies. The promise of the sixteenth century was fulfilled. The critical faculty aroused by the intellectual and religious ferment of the sixteenth, and kept alive by the tentative speculations of the seventeenth century, attained maturity in Locke, Voltaire, Montesquieu, Rousseau, Kant, Lessing, and many other critics and thinkers. Descartes and Bacon contributed, in the seventeenth century, a powerful impulse to this fulness of intellectual life, as they in their time had been influenced by the spirit of the preceding one. The eighteenth century was thus no creation of its own fruitful energy. It owed much to its predecessors. It was the legitimate development of the sixteenth and (with reservations) of the seventeenth—the harvest of the germs sown by the intellectual husbandmen of other days. In the intensity and comprehensive range of its activity, however, it dwarfed the seventeenth and overshadowed the sixteenth, which was too much absorbed in theological discussion to compare in this respect with the eighteenth. It is sufficient to say, in order to realise the contrast, that the sixteenth is the century of the Reformation, the eighteenth the century of the Revolution. Both are memorable, but in comprehensiveness of effects the eighteenth carries it by far.

The intellectual father of the century is not Descartes, but Locke, though Locke (and herein, as I have already indicated, lies the importance of Descartes) was, to some extent, the intellectual son of Descartes. Both as philosopher and political writer Locke's influence was enormous, and in no country was it more felt than in France. The writings of Voltaire, Montesquieu, Rousseau, bear witness to the fact. The memoirs of D'Argenson and other observers emphasise it,[1] and as to the growing influence of the intellectual movement on politics, theology, economics, society in general, it is almost superfluous to say that the journals of such observers constantly affirm it.[2] That movement had a practical side, and could not but powerfully influence the age. Locke was a practical politician, and a reformer as well as a philosopher. He is pre-eminently English in this respect, and the movement of which he was the father reflects the characteristics of the philosopher and the Englishman. The practical and the speculative were not allied, in different minds in France, in an equal degree, but the union, though less intense in some than in others, is patent in all. In Voltaire philosophy was turned against orthodoxy and obscurantism, and became militant scepticism. In Montesquieu it is less anti-christian and more exclusively humanitarian, and Montesquieu, while eschewing an aggressive attitude towards traditional theology, might dispute with Voltaire the title of apostle of humanity. Rousseau, too, though a political theorist, was a social and educational revolutionist. All the philosophers, in fact, whatever their special characteristics as thinkers and writers, were social reformers. Philosophy left the schools with Descartes and Bacon. It left the study with Locke, Voltaire, Montesquieu, Rousseau, and mingled in the world. We meet it in the salons, clubs, taverns, even in the streets of Paris. Society in France became a vast debating club which talked politics, economics, theology, in a practical reforming spirit. Opinion consequently became powerful, and ultimately overwhelmed tradition on the throne, at the altar, in the cabinet. This critical alertness thus became one of the most potent factors of a reaction against the old order of things, which grew with the century. So powerful was it that it made reform, if not revolution, indispensable all over Europe, and brought monarch and philosopher into line in a regular crusade of reform in Portugal, Spain, Italy, Prussia, and even Austria and Russia. Had the philosophers found in France a monarch with energy forcible enough, sympathy wide enough, to join actively in this crusade, they might

[1] See, for instance, D'Argenson, viii. 333, 334.

[2] See, for instance, *ibid.*, vi. 46, and Barbier, iv. 360.

have succeeded in forestalling revolution by reform. Louis XV. did not understand his age or take advantage of his opportunities, and the movement thus became more and more revolutionary and hostile to the throne. Philosophy was not at first hostile to monarchy; it was indeed open to the reproach, in the case of some of its exponents of being too servile in its attitude towards absolute kings, while it sought to win their co-operation and inspire them with its spirit. It failed in France because monarchy was effete.

It is incumbent on me, in view of its far-reaching results, to sketch this movement in its practical bearing on the age, at least. Mere speculation, erudition, I shall leave largely out of my survey. It is not philosophy in the schools, or the study, but in the arena of the world that merits our attention.

Voltaire, who was born in 1694, is a connecting link between the two centuries. He was old enough to carry forward into the new century the impressions and even some of the influences of the *Grand Siècle*. Yet the world of Voltaire is a most complete contrast in many respects to the world of Louis XIV. The eighteenth century was a century of reaction against religious, social, and political despotism; its work was to undo much of that of its predecessor, and, as a boy, Voltaire already felt the impulse of this reactionary influence. His early manhood was moulded in that small circle of free thinkers and livers which nurtured the seeds of reaction in the latter years of the Grand Monarch himself. He became a member of the coterie of the Temple, whose patron goddess was Ninon and whose Anacreon was the dissolute Abbé Chaulieu. Into this reactionary circle the wayward, sprightly François Marie Arouet passed from the Jesuit College, Louis le Grand, where his uncontrollable precocity, his marked independence of character and mind in spite of weak health, had troubled his Jesuit teachers, and left the disquieting conviction that in him the future would discover "the Coryphæus of Deism."[1] No wise father could regard without apprehension the effects of this association on the morals and the career of his son. The elder Arouet, who had been a notary before he became treasurer of the Chamber of Accounts,[2] wished the dissipated youth to follow his own profession of the law. The thing was impossible to a nature like that of Voltaire, who could no more be a notary than a notary could be a poet. Versification *à la*

[1] La Vie de Voltaire par Condorcet in tom. i. 193, of Œuvres Complètes, published by Garnier Frères, 1883.

[2] See Beuchot's notes to the Life by Condorcet; see also St Simon, xiii. 55, and xiv. 10.

Chaulieu, and supper parties with sceptical, nay, atheistical young men of fashion absorbed the time that should have been given to the study of Roman law, if the jurist was one day to shine at the Palais de Justice. Arouet, the elder, hoped to save the future legal luminary of his fond imagination from what seemed certain shipwreck by getting him attached to the French embassy at the Hague. Instead of attending to the duties of his post, the budding poet fell in love, and was sent home as a failure by the impatient ambassador. He had made a name as a rhymester, however. His reputation was so considerable by 1716, as to credit him in the eyes of the police with the authorship of a poem ("Les J'ai Vu") exposing in biting terms the despotism and misery of the late reign. On this unfounded suspicion he was thrown, in May 1717, into the Bastille, and for nearly a year he enjoyed the benefit of enforced solitude. The heavy hours were occupied in the study of Roman and Greek poetry, and in dramatic composition. "Œdipus" received the last touches, and the "Henriade" was begun. With the successful representation of the former piece shortly after his liberation, his public career may be said to have begun. "Œdipus" revealed to the poet Lamotte that France possessed a worthy continuator of Corneille and Racine. It revealed, at all events, the characteristic genius of its author as the high priest of free-thought, and the enemy of religious obscurantism. His dislike of the priests breaks through again and again:

> "Nos prêtres ne sont pas ce qu'un vain peuple pense,
> Notre crédulité fait toute leur science."[1]

Equally characteristic of the poet is the weakness for royalty. The censer is waved at the foot of the throne, while the battle-axe is raised against the altar. For instance:

> "Un roi pour ses sujets est un dieu qu'on révère."[2]
>
> "Adorés de leur peuple, ils sont des dieux euxmêmes."[3]

M. Voltaire bids fair at this stage to be the successor of Bossuet as apologist of monarchy. The attack on popular religion was, however, insinuated rather than avowed in "Œdipus." In the "Epistle to Uranie" (written in 1722, and circulated at first in MS.), the poet, professing to give to the troubled soul of Madame de Rupelmonde the reasons for and against the popular creed of his own time, boldly

[1] Œdipus, Œuvres, i. 68. [2] *Ibid.*, 56. [3] *Ibid.*, 47.

turns the balance against the Christian religion as offensive to reason and heart alike :

" Je ne reconnais point à cette indigne image
Le Dieu que je dois adorer.
Je croirais le déshonorer
Par une telle insulte et par un tel hommage."

The *habitué* of the Temple and the rival of Abbé Chaulieu in writing loose love-songs, the boon companion of fast and atheistical scions of aristocracy, who plays the *rôle* of spiritual adviser to a lady in doubt, is hardly a safe exegete of theological truth, and is scarcely entitled to an authoritative opinion on ethical and religious questions. After his release from the Bastille, and in spite of occasional repentant reflections, he remained the most shining spirit of the frivolous, dissolute society in which he had become entangled as a boy of thirteen. It was no school for superior wisdom or even common morality. There could be neither high feeling nor elevated thinking in such a group, and the lack of that chivalrous delicacy, that reverence for womanly virtue which springs from a pure mind, is a slur on the life of the young poet. It may be said for him that it was a slur on the age, but it is unfortunate that the merciless young critic of Christianity invalidated to so large an extent his right to criticism by the dissipations of an ill-regulated youth. At the same time, the superstition and hypocrisy of the age offered a tempting target to so great a master of sarcasm and ridicule. Be it remembered, too, in his favour that though he frequented frivolous company, he hated the distractions and seductions of Paris, which consumed so much precious time. "I fancy myself in hell," he wrote, "when I am in the accursed city of Paris." He was no idler at least, and after the first delirium of dissipation, there came the consciousness of power, and with it ambition and a delight in work which were to make him the most laborious as well as the most famous man of his time. He had no innate hankering after loose society, and his ambition and his tastes kept him a stranger to the worst excesses of the regency. Happily for him an incident, alike ludicrous and mortifying, erelong broke the spell. At one of the Duke of Sully's parties, he had the hardihood to give offence to a degenerate grandee of the name of Rohan-Chabot by one of his cutting sallies. "Who is the young man who talks so loud?" asked this lofty individual, whom Voltaire ventured to contradict. "My lord," was the reply, "he is one who does not carry about a great name, but wins respect for the name he has." In revenge, Rohan's

lackeys inflicted a public whipping on the offending poet. The furious poet diligently took lessons in swordsmanship, and sent a challenge to his castigator, and was thrown into the Bastille for his presumption. Here he spent a couple of weeks of galling confinement (April 1726), which steeled his innate hatred of injustice. He was released by Cardinal Fleury on the understanding that he should expatriate himself (May 1726). He chose England as the home of his exile, and landed at Greenwich on the 10th June. His acquaintance with Bolingbroke, his letters of introduction to Bubb Dodington, the friendship of Everard Falkener, a rich merchant whom he had known in Paris, secured him a warm welcome and an immediate host of friends in London society. His character did not impress his English friends very favourably. His flattery was fulsome, and he was not remarkable for uprightness, since he entered into the cabals of the political parties of the day, and yet tried to keep himself right with both. His conversation was often coarse, and it once, we are told, drove Mrs Pope out of her own dining-room. Notwithstanding these foibles, he was feted, petted, courted by the *élite* of rank and literature, and he has recorded, in return, his admiration of England, especially of English freedom of thought, in a series of "Lettres Philosophiques," or "Lettres sur les Anglais," which had the honour of being condemned by the Parliament of Paris in 1734.[1] The deference shown to men of letters, the substantial rewards which had recognised their genius during the previous quarter of a century, enchanted him. Addison, Newton, Locke, Congreve, Prior, and others had been raised to affluence by a discerning government, while in the France of Voltaire's day not even genius could keep a man from starvation. There was no despotic censor, no despotic Church to trammel mind or conscience. "An Englishman, like a free man, goes to heaven by whichever way he pleases."[2] English philosophical and scientific thought was the object of his keenest interest, and though he was a votary and even a champion of Deism before he arrived in England, the effect of his sojourn on his philosophical and religious opinions was enormous. In England, it may be said without exaggeration, he found his system and his mission. "From this moment," says Condorcet, "he felt himself called to destroy every sort of prejudice of which his country was the slave."[3] He became the disciple and exponent of

[1] See Liste des Livres Condamnés de 1715 à 1789 in Rocquain, L'Esprit Révolutionnaire, 499.

[2] Lettres Philosophiques, Œuvres, xx. 58.

[3] Vie de Voltaire, 202.

Newton and Locke. Collins and Woolston supplied him with arguments against revealed religion, and his marvellous faculty of luminous, and even popular exposition invested these arguments with a tremendous force in his hands. The trace of Shakespeare's influence may be noted in his tragedies. His departure from England in March 1729 was the departure of a crusader who had donned his armour for the battle with superstition and intolerance.[1] He took with him, too, a keen sympathy with English political institutions. His tone in the "Lettres" is that of a man who perceives the advantage of political freedom, and holds it up as worthy of imitation in France. The king, he says, is the chief pilot of the ship of State, but may not with impunity risk the attempt to make himself master of it. He extols, too, the part played by the commons in the government of the nation, and emphasises equality of taxation as a just and beneficial expedient in contrast to the arbitrary and oppressive system in vogue in France. The commercial spirit of the nation does not detract in his eyes from its prestige, but adds dignity to even its aristocracy. He does not hide his preference for the English merchant, whose transactions affect the remote parts of the world, over the French marquis, whose absorbing interest is the hour at which the king rises or goes to bed, and whose airs of grandeur towards his inferiors present a funny contrast to those of the slave in the ante-chamber of some powerful minister.

The publication of the "Lettres Philosophiques" produced a deep impression in France. "This work," says Condorcet, "marks among us the epoch of a revolution. It excited a taste for English philosophy and English literature, and an enthusiastic interest in the manners, politics, and commercial genius of this people."[2] Since the translation of the "Essay on the Human Understanding" by Coste in 1700, Locke had been known only to a small circle of philosophers.[3] Henceforth the "Essay" became the *vade-mecum* of all inquiring minds, but the attack on innate ideas roused the wrath of the doctors, who raised the cry of materialism and atheism, and demanded the suppression of the "Lettres." The Parliament responded by burning the book on the 10th June 1734, and Chauvelin, the keeper of the seals, issued a decree of exile against Voltaire, who prudently kept out of the way till the storm blew over. He had with less legitimate

[1] For interesting accounts of Voltaire's life in England, see Collins, Voltaire in England, and Ballantyne, Voltaire's Visit to England. The powerful influence of Locke and the English Deists on Voltaire is also noted by Villemain, Cours de Lit. Française au 18me. Siècle, i. 111.

[2] Vie de Voltaire, 208.

[3] *Ibid.*, 207.

prudence shielded himself from the threat of persecution, to which the "Epistle to Uranie" in 1732 exposed him, by passing it off as a posthumous work of the Abbé Chaulieu.[1]

In spite of his admiration of English political institutions, Voltaire did not return to France as a militant political partisan. English political freedom did not inspire him with the passionate energy that English intellectual liberty intensified. Nevertheless there is apparent in "Brutus," the tragedy at which he had been working in England, and which appeared shortly after his return, an enthusiasm for free political institutions and a hatred of political despotism. It is mere rhetoric as far as any practical political purpose in the author's mind was concerned. Yet "Brutus" is important as contributing to impress on the consciousness of France the type of patriotic, republican Roman who of old swore death to tyranny and was to reappear in Gallic colours in the coming revolution. In contrast to the king in "Œdipus," who is treated as a god, the king in "Brutus" is treated as a usurper and an enemy of the State. The republican spirit manifests itself with bold independence. The senate is reproached by the ambassador of Porsenna, King of Etruria, for having broken its oath of fidelity to Tarquin. Nay, replies Brutus, the oath of obedience is not an oath of slavery. It is a despotic king who is the real enemy of the laws and the welfare of the State, not the people whom he has driven to revolt.

> "Il nous rend nos serments lorsqu'il trahit le sien."[2]
>
> "Rome," he cries again, "eut ses souverains mais jamais absolus;
> Numa qui fit nos lois y fut soumis luimême."[3]

This hatred of a king who has broken the laws, this sweeping condemnation of absolutism, toned down only by the apology placed in the mouth of a traitor like Messala, may be nothing more than mere stage declamation. The piece is no political pamphlet in disguise, but this declamation within earshot of the palace of an absolute potentate, and a State dungeon, like the Bastille, to gag criticism of his *régime*, is remarkable. The subject probably, rather than the author, suggests these sentiments, yet Voltaire could hardly have penned these impassioned sentiments had he not felt a keen sympathy for political freedom.

> "Je suis fils de Brutus, et je porte en mon cœur
> La liberté gravée et les rois en horreur."

[1] Vie de Voltaire, 208, 209. [2] Œuvres, i. 221. [3] *Ibid.*, i. 221.

Abounding as it does in such striking rhymes, the piece rivets by its animation, its pathos, its elevation, apart from its political colouring.

It was the precursor of a series, all of them showing marvellous facility in verse making, coupled with dramatic imagination, and some like, "Zaire" (1732) and "Mahomet" (1741), armed with sharp barbs against superstition and fanaticism. To Zaire, for instance, religious belief is a mere matter of accident. *L'instruction fait tout*—Education does all.

> J'eusse été prés du Gange esclave des faux dieux,
> Chrétienne dans Paris, Musulmane en ces lieux."

Mahomet is the incarnation of religious imposture, and in order to make him out a mere charlatan, who plays for his own ends on the superstition of the people, Voltaire is unjust to Mahomet, though in so doing he only reflected the prejudice of his time. The prejudice had in his hands the advantage of serving two ends. For one thing, Mahomet might pass for an anti-Christian impostor. The dedication was actually accepted by Benedict XIV. on this understanding. Substitute, on the other hand, Moses for Mahomet, and you have an exposure of Jewish, and by implication, Christian hypocrisy and pretension. To confound the controversialist with the dramatist would, however, be to misread "Mahomet." Voltaire's main object was to compose a great drama, not a controversial poem, his dramatic aspirations being doubtless the inspirer of his dramatic creations.

Very different is the aim of some of his philosophical and historical works, notably of the "Essai sur les Mœurs," and its introduction, which bears the ambitious, but unmerited title of "La Philosophie de l'Histoire,"[1] written primarily for the instruction of Madame du Châtelet. In these works he appears as the leader of the critical movement whose roots lie in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, in Montaigne, Descartes, Bacon, Spinoza, Locke. But Voltaire is militant in a sense in which these were not. He attacks, with all the arms of luminous diction and biting sarcasm, the claim of Christianity to be a supernatural religion, giving no quarter to Christian faith, and waving the banner of Deism in the very faces of his antagonists. In them emancipated, militant reason strikes the keynote of the intellectual life of the century, and the blows are certainly energetic enough. The "Philosophy of History," in particular, is a refutation of, and a satire on the Christian view of man and his

[1] Œuvres, x. 1-120.

history. It is hostile to any preconceived religious idea, discovers no trace of a primeval revelation perpetuating itself in the history of a single race. The origin of the idea of God lies, as he probably rightly assumes, in the sentiment of human weakness and need. Each people thus created its own divinity, and even the Jews recognised at first the right of other peoples to worship their national gods. Later came the apotheosis of men into divinities and the procreation of children born of the intercourse of the gods and mortals. The son of God is not an exclusively New Testament figure; he is to be found in the mythology of every people. To read sense into these absurd fables, and find reason in folly, is a mark of human imbecility. The identity of many religious beliefs and ideas, among almost all the more civilised nations, discovers in all alike the same superstitious origin. The belief in one God was by no means confined to the Jews, who borrowed many of their religious ideas from the common faith of the civilised peoples of antiquity. All these peoples from Europe to India possessed the idea of one God and believed in the immortality of the soul. The Greek oracles were frauds, but their rascality was no worse than that of the Christian priesthood. In the one as in the other system "the rascal takes advantage of the imbecile." The perversion of common-sense in all ages under the influence of superstition revels in the marvellous. Christians not less than pagans were the victims of a childish credulity which swallowed with relish the most incredible stories and dogmas. When the Christians and the devotees of other cults could not make use of force, they made use of fraud. Hence miracles, sibylline prophecies, oracles, etc.

Voltaire appreciates the great peoples of antiquity, if he is to some extent wanting in discrimination towards the Christians. The political and religious systems of the ancient Chinese and Indians, the extraordinary precocity of the Chaldeans, the refinement and artistic sense of the Greeks, excite his respect and admiration. He breaks a lance for the achievement of these peoples whose history has suffered so much from Jewish and Christian prejudice. The fact of these ancient civilisations at a time when Europe was plunged in savagery, if inhabited at all, shows that the ancients had risen to high moral and spiritual conceptions long before Christianity claimed a monopoly of them. The Jews are specially obnoxious to him. He lashes their inhumanity, their spiritual pride, their fanaticism, their national egotism in the innocent tone of a credulous devotee. The reader is left to mingle his horror at the excesses of a band of robbers with the enjoyment of the naive irony that ridicules and cuts to the quick by

turns. Fanaticism and race hatred constitute for Voltaire the essence of the Old Testament.

The "Philosophy of History" prepares the reader for the "Essay on Manners," which claims to be a philosophical narrative of Christian civilisation down to the end of the Middle Ages. The early Christians, the mediæval Popes are treated with all the contempt of the apostle of reason, for whom the world has had too long to wait. The former were the ignorant devotees of fables, marvels, and puerilities of every kind. The latter were the products of the prevarications of history. The progress of Christianity contributed materially to the fall of the Roman Empire, on whose ruins the papal power exalted itself. Nevertheless, historic Christianity is nothing but a huge superstructure of legend, miracle, and pretension,—a growth of rascality and imbecility, which gathered like a fungus round the teaching of Jesus Christ. Dogmatic strife, religious ferocity obscured primitive Christianity. Here is the biting comment on this divine religion: "So many frauds, so many errors, so many disgusting crudities, by which we have been inundated for seventeen centuries, have only done harm to our religion. It is, without doubt, divine, because seventeen centuries of rascalities and imbecilities have not been able to discredit it, and we revere the truth so much the more because we hold lies in contempt."[1] And how does the man who dedicated "Mahomet" to Benedict XIV. think of most of his predecessors? The flattering pen of the dedication is tipped with the indignation and gall of the angry philosopher. "For centuries," says he, "the Popes were elected by violence, and the peoples and their rulers were so imbecile that an anti-pope, whose election was recognised by them, was from that moment the infallible vicar of God. This infallible personage having been deposed, the people revered the divinity in his successor, and these gods on earth, sometimes assassins, sometimes assassinated, sometimes poisoners, sometimes poisoned, enriching their bastards and at the same time emitting decrees against fornication, anathematising, fighting, and waging war, excommunicating, deposing kings, and selling the forgiveness of sins to the people, were at once the scandal, the horror, and the divinities of Catholic Europe."[2]

The long period reviewed, Christian though it be, is a long tale of barbarity—the barbarity of theological rancour, religious wars, grovelling superstition. It embodies a mass of crimes, follies, misfortunes; "amid which we have seen a few virtues, a few happy times, as we discover a few habitations scattered here and there in

[1] Œuvres, x. 170. [2] *Ibid.*, xi. 518.

the desert." From that past may God, that is, philosophy, deliver us. "Among all nations history has been disfigured by fable, until at last philosophy comes to enlighten men, and when at length she arrives in the midst of this darkness, she finds humanity so blinded by centuries of error that she can with difficulty undeceive it. She finds ceremonies, facts, monuments established to confirm lies."[1]

Such is the message of reason to the eighteenth century. It sounds very commonplace now. It was new and audacious to Voltaire's contemporaries. That the whole basis on which the Church stood was rotten, and that the Church had consequently no claim to respect or authority, was a startling declaration in an age in which the Church claimed to be the sole repository of truth. That the time had come when rationality should take the place of superstition, and that Voltaire was its apostle, seemed the height of effrontery. The self-confidence of the new apostle must have seemed amusing, if it had not been so irritating to the ecclesiastical dignitaries, who were roundly told that they and their predecessors were a set of rascals and imbeciles. And certainly to the alert eye of the historian there was much in the eight centuries from Charlemagne to Henry IV. to suggest the conclusion. Much of that history, if we take reason for our standpoint, must appear a parody of Christianity. There is no question about that, and the strong point of Voltaire's indictment, bias and assumption apart, is the trenchant directness with which he probes the fanaticism, the ignorance, the hypocrisy, the inhumanity which have so often, intentionally or unintentionally, passed themselves off for Christian. And how much was there in his own age which reflected the picture of past times, and was fitted to confirm him in his militant scepticism? The acrid controversies, moral declension, traditional bigotry of the Church of the eighteenth century tended only too deservedly to provoke the critic and the mocker. If ever severe criticism was legitimate, it was in Voltaire's day. Ridicule is not philosophy, it is not argument, but it is a very effective weapon of destruction, and to a militant spirit like Voltaire the main thing is to destroy. If conflict was inevitable, attack was the only alternative. The battlefield is the place for blows, not for arguments, and the clearing process was certainly clamant enough. To attack a colossal system of superstition and persecution was good work at any rate. To fight for humanity and justice against a powerful institution which was steeped in bigotry, intolerance, and injustice, was a noble fight. If the battle was waged against a Church and a theology that had trampled on both human-

[1] Œuvres, xi. 517.

ity and justice, what need to cry sacrilege? What was good in the Church and in Christianity would doubtless survive, and it was time that the evil elements were cleared out. The sacrilege, if sacrilege there was, was of a truth not all on Voltaire's side. The historical Church in France was a fraud and a scandal, and had long been, since it became a mundane organisation under false supermundane pretences, and an engine of oppression of mind and conscience. When a man's liberty and even his life was at the mercy of every ignorant, immoral priest, only too ready to disgrace morality and parody humanity, it was assuredly time for a Voltaire to speak out.

On the other hand, his bias and prejudice incline him to overlook the other side. While the "Essay" reveals a high tone of justice and humanity, a fine spirit of revolt against spiritual tyranny and superstition, it shows a want of insight into the deeper moral and religious aspirations of the soul. Of that life of high aspiration which leads to self-sacrifice, which holds the soul under the spell of things unspeakable, which touches the conscience and the imagination with a mystic power, Voltaire had no conception. His principle of rational judgment is at times too narrowly applied. He forgets that the philosophical historian has not merely to expose absurdities, but to explain movements. This Voltaire does not sufficiently do, with his easy method of pointing out the ridiculous or contemptible side of Christian history, while ignoring too much its moral and spiritual significance. This deeper something in the lives of sincere and exemplary Christians—and, thank God, there were many such, for the progress of the world,—which braved torture and privation, and bathed the dark world in the light of an ineffable consciousness, is beyond the ken of a rationality which is itself so little under moral restraint, so imperfectly coupled with conscience. His philosophy as applied to history is at times superficial, and his essay is, therefore, inadequate. The same blemish attaches to the "Philosophy of History." It is too biassed; it is not sufficiently dispassionate. There is much that is true in it, but its general statements are inclined to be too sweeping. He is, for instance, unable to grasp the moral elevation of Jewish monotheism in contrast to the monotheism of other peoples, even after making allowance for the essential narrowness of the Jewish mind. He overlooks the excellence of many of their institutions. He proceeds too much on the assumption that the priest, especially the Jewish and Christian priest, must be a rascal and his votaries imbeciles. It contains, of course, errors of fact as well as errors of assumption. It is, moreover, unfair to reason on the life of the soul as we reason out a mathematical proposition. The human

soul is too subtle an entity for such reasoning to reach the exact truth. Many of the facts of the case thus escape the notice of their critic, and to follow him in our philosophy of religion and history would be to take as our guide a man with too little knowledge, and, what is as important, too limited insight. Still, it has its merits. There is a great deal of common-sense in the exposure of narrow religious dogmatism and pretension. It is a much-needed antidote to Bossuet, and it is historically important as a statement of the religious creed of the humanitarian philosopher of the eighteenth century. It was this creed that sapped the authority of the Church and crushed it in the Revolution. The motto, *Écrasez l'infame*, "crush the monster," is fierce, but it is explicable in view of the sanguinary intolerance that had disgraced the Church for ages. With imprisonment, expatriation, the galleys, the dungeon, and even the stake at the service of its bigotry and superstition, it was high time to challenge it to mortal combat on behalf of reason, liberty, and humanity. Voltaire is, in many respects, the very man to throw down the challenge, with his marvellous powers of critical and acquisitive energy, his irresistible gift of clear and telling exposition. Not that he had the outspoken ardour of the martyr. He was not a man of heroic mould. He dodged whenever he could, published the most compromising things anonymously, courted the favour of ministers and mistresses, disowned unblushingly what he had written, prevaricated and cringed on occasion. It is unpleasant to have to record these things of an apostle, who was also a philosopher, but it should be remembered that the blame lies with the age as much as with the man. Only by such tactics could he keep his head above water, with zealots swarming about him, a tyrannic censor ready to strike at him, and an unenlightened Parliament only too willing to put in force the fiat of the censor. No sooner was he back in Paris, than, as we have seen, the bloodhounds of intolerance were on his track. They continued to dog his steps all his life, and to escape them and find tranquillity to work was the main reason of his withdrawal to the castle of Cirey in Lorraine, the residence of Madame du Châtelet. The manners of the time rendered such a *liaison* quite natural. Nobody saw any incongruity, not even Madame's husband,—husband merely *en titre*, who gratified his cosmopolitan tastes at Paris and elsewhere—in the fact of a married woman and an unmarried man living in not altogether Platonic friendship for the better part of fifteen years. The attraction for these two singular natures was, however, mainly intellectual, for Madame du Châtelet was an ardent student of philosophy and science, and both inspired and received inspiration

from her companion. Severe labour was the order of the establishment, and this methodic application was only broken by the romance of basking for a short time in Madame de Pompadour's favour. It was only, as we have seen elsewhere, at very considerable cost in self-respect that Voltaire succeeded in getting himself nominated gentleman of the chamber, Academician, and historiographer royal. The man of genius was not above the vanity of shining among the trivial lights of the court of Louis XV., and paying for the pleasure in discreditable sycophancy, nay, even fawning on the bigots and the Jesuits from motives of policy.[1] Happily for him, he failed to ingratiate himself into the durable function of a court poet and historian, and returned to Cirey. There he found a successful rival for the affections of the *Femme Savante* in St Lambert, a small poet with an insinuating address. Strange to say, one house contained both of them until Madame's existence terminated in a miserable scandal in September 1749, which did not shock the blunted moral susceptibilities of the age, and Voltaire was left to seek some other refuge. This he found for a time at Potsdam, where he became the *alter ego* of the philosophic Frederick. This sojourn lasted three years, from 1750 to 1753. Unlike the sojourn at London, it was but a transient episode, and contributed little or nothing to the formation of the mind of the philosopher.[2] Voltaire was nothing but the brilliant ornament of a highly intellectual and sceptical court, the rival of Maupertuis, President of the Berlin Academy of the Sciences, the companion and then the plaything of Frederick. The episode ended in a quarrel and the painful, yet ludicrous incident at Frankfurt which rendered the estrangement irrevocable, though philosopher and king continued their correspondence after an interval.[3]

He had added to his reputation by the "Siècle de Louis XIV." and the "Essai sur les Mœurs," and when he at last ended his wanderings at Ferney (1758), within sight of the Jura and near Geneva, his château became a sort of intellectual court for all Europe. Here he received the visits of ever-increasing numbers of disciples; here the homage, too, of many of the remarkable men of his time; here he carried on that vast correspondence with admirers and inquirers in every country, among them rulers like Catherine, Frederick, and Joseph II., Christian VII. of Denmark, Gustavus III. of Sweden, with cardinals, marshals, bishops, with Diderot, D'Alembert, Turgot, Rousseau, etc. Here, too, he added work after work of the most

[1] Condorcet, Vie de Voltaire, 224. [2] See Morley, Voltaire, 161.

[3] He has told the story of his Potsdam sojourn in his usual biting vein in the Mémoires pour servir à la Vie de Voltaire, (Œuvres, i. (1883).

various *genre*, some of them like "La Pucelle" and "Candide," abortions of unlovely aspect. Here, as lord of the manor, he erected his church to God, and became the temporal father of the Order of the Capucins of Gey. Here he could enjoy that independence, so indispensable to his nature, so highly prized after his experience of courts and royal patrons. "There is nothing," he writes appreciatively after his installation in his own house, "so sweet as to make one's fortune by one's own exertions." To be able to live independently and work without care, is the *summum bonum* of an author's life, and it was because he felt the irksomeness of dependence on royal patronage, that he forsook Potsdam for liberty. Ferney brought freedom and peace, and he would not have given Ferney for a hundred Potsdams. "I have in these two habitations" (Ferney, near Geneva, and Monriond, near Lausanne), "that which kings cannot give, or rather that of which they deprive one—peace and liberty. After having lived with kings, I have made myself king in my own house, in spite of immense losses."[1]

Ferney was not the mere hermitage of the patriarch of letters. From his solitude Voltaire surveyed France and Europe with an eye ever alert to injustice, and a heart that beat warm with sympathy for the oppressed. His *rôle*, as a social reformer, was a truly noble one, and leads us to forgive all the more readily his sins as a man. Natural religion may claim in him one of its noblest exponents on the practical side. The sentiments of commiseration and justice, which he found written in the breast of pristine man, were splendidly exemplified in his advocacy of the claims of justice against the cruel intolerance of his time. "It is necessary to distinguish in a heresy between opinion and faction. Would you prevent a riot from overthrowing the State, be tolerant. . . . There is no other alternative for the statesman than to put to death without pity the leaders and the adherents, men, women, and children, without a single exception, or to tolerate them. The former course is that of a monster; the second that of a sage."[2] This was written on the occasion of the death of Jean Calas, whom the bigoted Parliament of Toulouse condemned as a Protestant, and as the murderer of his own son in 1762, and he devoted the best part of three years to a persistent attempt to procure redress to the widow of the unfortunate victim of intolerance and judicial murder. In 1765 his efforts were rewarded to the extent of rehabilitating the memory of the unhappy father, and

[1] Mémoires, Œuvres, i.

[2] Traité de la Tolerance, quoted by Janet, Hist. de la Science Politique, ii. 410.

procuring an indemnity for his widow. He succoured another Protestant, Servin, who escaped a similar fate by a timely flight to Geneva. He raised his voice against the judicial murder of La Barre, who was executed at Abbeville on a false charge of sacrilege. He championed the cause of the serfs of Franche Comté against the oppression of the monks of St Claude, and he had the satisfaction of helping to vindicate the memory of Lally.[1] Philosophy might justly boast that in these actions of its patriarch it had won its best vindication from the aspersions of a persecuting Church. To him is due the honour of initiating in France a crusade on behalf of religious liberty, which gained many adherents, and was by-and-by to lead to far larger results than the defence and vindication of individual Protestants. Equally admirable is his demand for the reform of the abuses of an antiquated jurisprudence. Unsparing and righteous is his condemnation of the inhuman criminal law of France, the law of confiscation, the refusal of compensation to the innocent who have suffered imprisonment, the secret hearing of witnesses, the application of torture, the evils of serfage, the excessive use of capital punishment.[2]

Though an ardent champion of humanity, and a practical social reformer, Voltaire had nothing of the democrat in his nature. He was no political reformer—no political revolutionist. He was not in this sense, like Rousseau, the prophet of the people. He looks at politics from the standpoint of the man of the world, or at least of the philosopher, not of the prophet. In "Brutus," indeed, as we have seen, he puts with evident sympathy, and in keeping with the subject, impassioned republican sentiments into the mouth of the hero. "Brutus" is, however, tragedy, not politics, and of an active interest in the political development of the people in France, there is little trace in Voltaire's works. "The masses," says St Beuve, "appeared to him naturally stupid. He believes in the good sense only of the small number, and it is enough for him if he succeed in increasing little by little the small flock." He was not, therefore, a militant force in politics as in philosophy, theology, and sociology. He was the apostle of reason, not of revolution. Nevertheless, as a historian and critic, he could not help being somewhat of a politician, and his political views, as scattered throughout his writings, are interesting, if not epoch making. They are at times democratic enough in theory. He does not fail to note in the "Essai sur les Mœurs"

[1] See Condorcet, 250-268.

[2] See, in particular, the chapter "Des Lois" in Siècle de Louis XV., Œuvres, xiii. 194-201.

that the monarchy was elective among the Franks and other barbarous peoples, and that hereditary monarchy was only the product of later times. In his opinion, however, the people is not, as a matter of course, more virtuous and happier under a republic than under a monarchy, and he points to the civil troubles of the Italian republics in support of his conclusion. As the "Siècle de Louis XIV." shows, he was an admirer of the *régime* of the most absolute of French kings. Nevertheless, he pronounces monarchy, which under a Louis XII. may be a blessing, as the worst form of government under a feeble or wicked king. He is a staunch (though not an aggressive or resolute) opponent of despotism, and an advocate, in theory at least, of self-government. "A pure despotism," he remarks, in his "Idées Republicaines," "is the punishment of men's own faults. If a community is mastered by a single individual, or by several individuals, it is evidently because it has neither the courage nor the skill to govern itself." Consequently, in his view, self-government is the natural and only worthy form of government, which he tells us more explicitly "consists in the execution of the will of all by one person, or by several in virtue of the laws which all have enacted." This democratic sentiment might be taken from the "Contrat Social." So might the following: "A society being composed of several families and properties, it is contradictory that a single man should be the master of these families and properties; it is in accordance with nature that each master should have a voice in the welfare of the society. . . . It belongs to the citizens to regulate what they believe they ought to furnish for the welfare of the State." Democratic suffrage is, however, above his conception. "Those who have no property have no more right to regulate affairs than a clerk, paid by a merchant, has a right to regulate his commerce." Liberty, too, is equally precious with property. "'Liberty and property' is the motto of the English. This cry is far more precious than 'St George and my right,' 'St Denis et Monjoie.' It is the cry of nature itself." Like Montesquieu, he was, as the "Lettres Philosophiques" prove, an ardent admirer of the English constitution, which could not satisfy the democratic aspirations of a Rousseau. "I believe that a constitution which has regulated the rights of the king, the nobles, the people, and in which each finds his security will last as long as human affairs endure. I also believe that all States, which are not founded on such principles, will experience revolutions."[1] Liberty is, moreover, essential to prosperity.

[1] See Janet, Hist. de la Science Politique, ii. 412, 413; and Barni, Idées Morales et Politiques, i. 283 *et seq.*

Geneva, for instance, owes its increase of population, industry, and commerce to its freedom. Equality before the law is indispensable to liberty, but equality in other respects is a chimera. "Those who hold," he remarks in the "Essai sur les Mœurs," "that all men are equal, express a great truth if they mean that all men have an equal right to liberty and property, and the protection of the laws. They much deceive themselves if they believe that all men ought to be equal in their vocations, since they are not so by their talents." Yet with all respect to Voltaire, who only repeats an old assertion, it may be taken as an axiom that average mankind is equal in intelligence, and that this inequality of vocation, on which he lays so much stress, is the result of accident, luck, or education, not of an essential superiority of intellect or character. Educate the people, and you will very soon create equality of vocation, besides many other equalities unknown to men whom philosophy, or rank, or wealth have no made superior to other mortals, but merely more arrogant and con ceited. Voltaire's dislike of that equality, which education tends tc beget, is all the more surprising inasmuch as he hates feudalism. "It is certain that no people would, of their own free will, have chosen this form of government." Boulainvilliers' theory, which founds the privileges of the French nobility on the right of con quest, is a fable. Even if the noble could prove his title by direc descent from the conquerors of the Gauls, what is to hinder the descendants of these Gauls from resuming the rights which the Franks usurped?

In all this there is no attempt to elaborate a system like Mon tesquieu, or enforce a political gospel like Rousseau. These views are the reflections of the historian rather than the deductions of the theorist. He values political liberty for its utility, and is impatient of the political doctrinaire, especially of the democratic type. He is accordingly a stout opponent of Rousseau, who appears to him a *charlatan sauvage*. He confutes, in the "Philosophy of History," the doctrine that progress from pristine democracy is perversion. Man is perfectible up to the point at which nature has marked the limits of his perfection. This perfection is the natural trend of human destiny, for primitive man had in him the possibilities of the future. He has always been what he is, *i.e.*, social, perfectible, progressive. He has always manifested that instinct which leads him to love himself in the companion of his joys, in his children, in his grandchildren, in the works of his hands. The basis of society having always existed, there must always have been society. Man is not made for solitude, as Rousseau insists. His natural state was not that of the

wild beast (Darwin was not yet born), nor did progress mean degeneration. Two sentiments serve as the foundation of society—commiseration and justice, and these are derived from the principle of universal reason with which God has endowed man (what of the cannibals?). "God has given us a principle of universal reason, as He has given feathers to the birds and fur to the bear, and this principle is so constant that it subsists in spite of all the passions which combat it, in spite of the tyrants who wish to drown it in blood, in spite of impostors who wish to destroy it in superstition. It is this which makes the most gross people judge always correctly in the long run of the laws which govern it, because it feels whether these laws are conform or opposed to the principles of justice and commiseration which live in its heart."[1]

He condemns energetically both Rousseau's social philosophy and its revolutionary tendency. "There are some people, blind *enragés*, who seek to sap the foundation of society, whilst pretending to reform it. They have been foolish enough to maintain that *thine* and *mine* are crimes, and that one ought not to enjoy the fruit of his labours, that not only are all men equal, but that (perverting the order of nature) man is born for solitude like a wild beast, that the beavers, the bees, and the ants derange the eternal laws by living in a republic. These impertinences, worthy of a lunatic asylum, have been for some time in fashion, like the monkeys which are made to dance at the fairs."[2]

SOURCES OF THIS CHAPTER.—Primarily, the Œuvres Complètes de Voltaire, published by Garnier Frères, 1883; La Vie de Voltaire par Condorcet; Mémoires de St Simon; Journals de D'Argenson and Barbier; Collins, Voltaire in England; Ballantyne, Voltaire's Visit to England; Morley, Voltaire; Rocquain, L'Esprit Révolutionnaire au XVIIIme. Siècle; Villemain, Cours de la Littérature Française au XVIIIme. Siècle; Janet, Histoire de la Science Politique, ii.; Voltaire, Siècle de Louis XV.; Barni, Idées Morales et Politiques.

[1] Phil. de l'Hist., Œuvres, x. 17.

[2] See the chapter "Du Progrès de l'Esprit Humain" in the Siècle de Louis XV.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### MONTESQUIEU, CHAMPION OF LEGALITY.

VOLTAIRE'S career is the record of the growth and influence of rationalism in France in the eighteenth century. He turned the searchlight of reason on the abuses of the Church and society. He attacked the dominant theology, and he raised his voice against injustice and inhumanity. His activity as apostle of reason, great and effective though it was, was not comprehensive, however. He left to others the task of carrying the rationalist movement into the domains of politics, of applying the critical spirit to political institutions. This part of the rationalist programme was performed by other writers, who, like him, stand in the front rank of the intellectual leaders of the century. Montesquieu and Rousseau were caught by the fever of political discussion inherited from the sixteenth century, and quickened by the speculative influence of Locke and the practical influence of the disasters of the latter years of Louis XIV.'s reign, and by the reactionary spirit of the regency. We have already made the acquaintance of this critical spirit in the political reformers and pamphleteers of the beginning of the century, in a Fénélon, a St Simon, a Boulainvilliers. It came to maturity in Montesquieu and Rousseau, in the author of the "Esprit des Lois" and the author of the "Contrat Social." It found interesting, if not epoch-making expression, in lesser writers like the Abbé St Pierre and the Marquis D'Argenson, and, at a later period, in Mirabeau, senior, Raynal, Morellet, Mably, etc. With these we need hardly concern ourselves except in passing. Montesquieu and Rousseau completely dwarf all their fellow political thinkers, whether we consider their works or the influence of their doctrines.

The Abbé St Pierre who, from his age and his fertility, merits the title of the political patriarch of the eighteenth century, was an ardent reformer, with a mania for writing down his manifold reform projects. Though many of these were chimerical, they served to excite an interest in politics, and give an impulse to political discussion. He was one of the most enthusiastic members of the

political club known as the "Entresol," where he found a congenial valve for ventilating his theories after his expulsion as a political heretic from the Academy.[1] The club was founded by the Abbé Alary in 1724, on the model of the political societies of the Luxemburg and the Louvre, which had enjoyed a transient existence towards the end of the reign of Louis XIV.[2] It was the resort of all the reforming spirits of the time, with whom the exiled Bolingbroke maintained sympathetic relations, before it was suppressed by Cardinal Fleury as dangerous to the State. The Abbé de St Pierre was a great believer in a political academy, of which the Entresol should be the germ, and whose object should be the realisation of reform by the dissemination of true political principles. The wider the knowledge of such principles, the more effectively governed would the nation be. To its bar every man with a political scheme should come for judgment and recognition. To it should belong the prerogative of deciding whether the adoption of such schemes were advisable for the good of the State, and of decreeing a reward to the fortunate author. The abbé's academy should thus be more than a mere political association; it should be a court of arbitration whose judgments, after verification by the Council of State, should become legislative acts. Henceforth the State should practically be governed by a committee of political philosophers. To them should also belong the function of electing, directly or indirectly, the candidates for administrative offices, from whom the sovereign should choose his ministers. By this expedient the best men would infallibly be given the opportunity of devoting their talents to the service of their country. Unfortunately for the abbé's reform programme, Cardinal Fleury was no believer in political philosophers, and brusquely deprived France of the benefit of the experiment. "I perceive, sir," said he to the abbé, "that you propose to treat of practical politics in your assemblies. Since these discussions usually go further than is desirable, it is not advisable that they should be continued."[3] The fertile abbé had, however, other projects for the good of the State, and one of these, which he shared with St Simon and others, did get the chance of experiment. This was the "Polysynodie," or plurality of councils, which aimed at substituting a committee of councillors for each minister of State. The plan was, as we have seen, put in operation by the regent with sufficiently unsatisfactory results, in spite of the array of millennial advantages which the abbé postulated. The experiment, in fact, landed the business of administration

[1] Mémoires de St Simon, xiv. 389, 390.
[2] D'Argenson, i. 91 *et seq.*
[3] D'Argenson, i. 108, 109.

in chaos. To confound the deliberative with the executive function was to invite confusion and anarchy, as the doctrinaires of the Revolution likewise discovered seventy years later, when they attempted to put the abbé's principles once more in practice. Equally visionary was the project of the confederation of the greater powers in the interests of universal and permanent peace. This scheme was the echo of the pious wishes of Henry IV. and Sully for the substitution of arbitration for force in the settlement of international disputes, with armed compulsion as the ultimate resort in the case of opposition on the part of any of the members to the decision of the others. The scheme had much to recommend it, and it was not difficult for the abbé to adduce many arguments in its support. But it was liable to formidable objections, unless the abbé's logic could reason the spirit of nationality into subordination to that of humanity. Not even Henry and Sully could rise to this superlative degree of sacrifice, and where they failed, even the reforming monarchs of the eighteenth century, with the abbé for mentor, were unable to succeed. Moreover, the supremacy of a universal monarchy, which was virtually what the scheme must have led to, was as undesirable in the interests of popular liberty as it was unattainable.[1]

The abbé had a considerable following, however, and among his friends and followers was the Marquis D'Argenson. The marquis, like his master, was a voluminous writer, though he left much of his writing in manuscript. St Simon pronounced him a dolt in comparison with his showy brother, the count and minister of war. This is one of St Simon's stupid estimates. The marquis, on the contrary, proved himself a very able administrator as minister for foreign affairs during an all too brief interval, and was, besides, as we have had ample reason to conclude, one of the acutest and most original politicians of the reign of Louis XV. The criticisms of public affairs, contained in his "Journal and Memoirs," are those of a man who stood head and shoulders over the *petits maîtres* of his day. He possessed rare sagacity, a very exceptional grasp of both domestic and international politics, the will to reform, the ability, probably, to save the monarchy. He saw, as clearly as it is possible for a far-sighted, reflective mind to see, the chasm towards which government in France was surely tending, and in his numerous writings he pictures the state of things that must sooner or later arise, and suggests expedients for averting it. Unhappily for France, the *petit maître* on the throne

[1] There is a useful monograph on the abbé by Édouard Goumy, Étude sur la Vie et les Écrits de l'Abbé de St Pierre. M. Barni also devotes a long discussion to him in his Idées Morales.

and in the cabinet frustrated the patriotic and enlightened schemes of the real *maître* in politics, as the *petit maître* in other departments of activity besides politics will often do in this intriguing world. D'Argenson was one of those men of genius born to play a certain *rôle*, who never *vient à propos* as the French have it, never get their opportunity, while the much smaller men pose in their place to the detriment of the world in general. It is pathetic to listen to him, in his impotent solitude, planning, hoping, striving, offering to do the part that was his by right of merit, while the country is being governed straight into chaos by the small minds who understand better than he the miserable business of incensing a dotard in authority, and fawning on the pamperess of his lust and his imbecility. Great is *petit maîtredom* in this eighteenth century. Great in every century, and it will probably more or less reign supreme in the world to the end of time. So thinks D'Argenson at any rate, and not without reason. "If I were in power," "If I were prime minister," etc., he keeps on ejaculating. Do not overheat yourself, good marquis; you will never be prime minister, and you will never again be in power. I have already done ample justice to him as journalist, the journalist of silence, who addresses to the future the reflections that a stupid world would not listen to, certainly the hardest kind of journalism which a fervent politician can exercise. He was also a historian and political thinker of a very high stamp, the true successor, in some respects, of Boisguilbert, and as unsuccessful, as much a voice crying in the wilderness of his contemporary age as he. In his "Pensées sur le Réformation de l'État," and in his "Considerations sur le Gouvernement de la France,"[1] to which I can only passingly refer, he lifts up his testimony, in defiance of a deaf generation of *petits maîtres*, against maladministration, and proclaims what he regards as the true salvation of the State. In so doing he is sometimes utopian, but in general, as we should expect from his training and experience, he is far more practical than the well-intentioned, but somewhat visionary abbé. Among the abuses that he denounces is over centralisation. He demands the restoration of local government, and he evolves a scheme of redistribution which anticipates in some of its salient features that of the revolutionists. The people, he holds, knows its own interests best, and is better fitted to look after them than an administrative hierarchy, manipulated by a central power, and tending to keep it in slavery. Restore the liberties of the communes, he demands, and thus teach the people to do for itself what no official can do so well for it. "In

[1] Published in 1767, but written in 1739.

order to govern better, govern less." "The best government is that in which control and liberty are rightly mingled." By liberty he does not understand political liberty in the democratic sense. He is no democrat in the modern meaning. He dislikes popular assemblies, is no friend of Parliaments. A strong reforming monarch is his ideal; reform from above, not from below his grand expedient. The people shall co-operate with, not control the monarchy. This is one of his idiosyncrasies which the earlier part of the century shares with him. He will, nevertheless, destroy feudal privilege root and branch, and in this respect he is surprisingly democratic for a marquis, who is the contemporary of St Simon. He hates the whole order of things that has created a race of men who vaunt high-sounding titles, enjoy vast privileges, and have degenerated into the parasites of their country. Feudalism is synonymous with usurpation, the right of the strong against the weak. He would confine to the nobility all the administrative posts, but only in virtue of utility, and he would deprive it of all oppressive privileges, such as exemption from taxation, nay, in some of his erratic moments, he would abolish aristocratic distinctions outright. But is not this pure democracy? "That," replies the marquis, "is not an objection; it is a confirmation of our scheme." The author, he adds, has the honour to be himself a gentleman. Though an ardent champion of hereditary monarchy, it is also only because of its expediency. The right to rule belongs essentially to the most capable, and if monarchy is historically expedient, it exists, not for the benefit of the monarchy but for the benefit of the subject, as all the "illuminated" monarchs of the day will erelong repeat. The true monarch should rule over citizens, not over slaves. Liberty is the strongest prop of the throne, and public order legitimates public liberty. However monarchic in sentiment, he sees little or no hope of saving the throne in the France of Louis XV. Such an effete despotism simply cannot exist much longer. These are remarkable sentiments for an aristocratic gentleman not merely to profess, but to enforce with great strength of argument, and in the Marquis D'Argenson we hail one of the forerunners of the liberal eighteenth-century French noblemen of the stamp of a Mirabeau and a La Rochefoucauld, who were to distinguish themselves as the advocates of popular rights *versus* absolute king and feudal lord of the manor.[1]

Unlike the abbé and the marquis, Baron de Montesquieu treated politics, not from the practical, but from the historical and philoso-

[1] For D'Argenson's life and opinions, see the Introduction to the Journal et Mémoires, by M. Bathery.

phical point of view. Not that he is a mere philosopher of the study, without distinctive opinions on current political tendencies. He had his ideas on contemporary politics, and in his earliest work, the "Lettres Persanes," he made a covert attack on the political and social abuses of the time. It is easy to discover, even in the "Esprit des Lois," that he had formed very decided views on government, and was a staunch antagonist of arbitrary monarchy, but these views are expressed for the most part furtively and incidentally. What he strove to achieve, as we shall see more at length presently, was to unfold and differentiate the laws inherent in and accruing from certain forms of constituted society. He is concerned with the past rather than with the present or the future, and seeks to deal with history as a scientist deals with the laws of natural phenomena.

He was born at the castle of Brède, near Bordeaux, in 1689, and began his career as a councillor of the Parliament of that city in 1714. Two years later he became president *à mortier*, and held the post till 1726. He was already famous as the author of the "Lettres Persanes," published in 1721, which seemed to presage a rival to Voltaire in the art of *persiflage*. Like Voltaire, too, he was not in his element in the profession of the law, and at last determined to follow his literary instinct and shake himself free from what were to him the trammels of a legal career. He therefore sold his place as president, and, like Descartes, set out on a course of travel which embraced Germany, Italy, England, before settling down in 1732, at the castle of La Brède, to the great literary task which had by this time taken possession of his mind.

Montesquieu has portrayed himself in sententious strokes. His character study displays a singularly well-balanced temperament, capable of pleasure, yet alien to excess of passion. He must have been a remarkably serene and happy mortal who could say, "I have hardly ever tasted sorrow, still less *ennui*." This experience must have been committed to paper before the last eleven books of the "Esprit des Lois" were written, for the second part of his great work cost him, on his own confession, infinite labour and suffering. "I am running a long course," he complained in the invocation to the Virgin of Mont Piérie, which he intended to stand at the beginning of the twentieth book; "I am overwhelmed with sadness and *ennui*. Endue my mind with the charm and sweetness I formerly felt and which flee far from me. Thou art never so divine as when thou leadest to wisdom and truth by the way of pleasure." Apart, however, from the cares of a vast and difficult undertaking, Montesquieu experienced the unclouded happiness of a moderate sensibility. "My machine

is so happily constructed that I am struck by objects in a sufficiently forcible manner to derive pleasure from them, yet not so vividly that they cause me pain." Insensible to ambition he was not, but it was not of that restless sort which feverishly seeks to overreach nature. Even in love he played the part of philosopher with remarkable success. His youthful attachments had nothing of the romantic or the tragic in them. He could feel the attraction of beauty, yet he could extricate himself without remorse or repining. His reason kept a remarkably effective control over his heart. "I have had in my youth the good fortune to feel attachment to women whom I believed were in love with me. The moment I ceased to believe in their affection, I suddenly detached myself from their influence." His most pronounced characteristic was an intellectual sensibility, which was a source of pleasure, seldom of pain, as in the case of many men of genius. His capacity for intellectual effort was an infallible remedy for care. "Study has been for me the sovereign remedy for the troubles of life. I have never had a grief which an hour's reading has not dissipated." Though this facility for reasoning oneself into the best of good humour does not produce a heroic figure, most will, nevertheless, envy his equanimity. With what ease does he succeed in striking the note of a happy day, and in attuning the smooth course of daily action to some tranquillising thought of the morning. The light of returning day is for him the fascinating harbinger of happiness. "I awake with a secret joy at beholding the light; I see it with a sort of ravishing, and during the rest of the day I am content." He was master of his imagination and could wean even his active and powerful mind into a suitable lethargy. He could interrupt a train of reflection, step into bed with perfect restfulness, and sleep through the whole night. While he enjoyed society, and could scarcely conceive the idea of solitude, yet when he is alone in his castle he thinks no more of the world. He could suffer the intercourse of fools equally with men of talent, and could extract amusement even from the bore. Yet he was easily disconcerted in company. When he felt that his auditors expected something brilliant, he was sure to disappoint them. "When I feel that I am being listened to, the whole question vanishes from my mind. . . . Timidity has been the curse of my life. It seems to affect even my organs, bind my tongue, envelop my thoughts in a cloud, derange my language." He had a mania for writing, if not for speaking, and had no sooner written a book than he was ashamed of it. His opinion of the great work which has made him immortal is characteristically modest. "It will be more approved than read. Such

reading may afford pleasure, it never affords amusement." He was not satisfied with the performance of his task, at least of parts of it. "I had conceived the design of extending and deepening certain portions. I have become incapable of the task." The reason is a melancholy and touching one. "My studies have enfeebled my eyesight, and it seems as if there only remained to me the light which is merely the aurora of the day when they shall close for ever." Though naturally diffident, he was conscious of independence of character. "I have made it a principle never to do by means of another what I could do for myself." He could sincerely affirm that he had never cringed at court for the sake of place or pension. He was not rich, was in fact hard-up at times, but he would not bend to beg favours. His answer to the individual who gave him to understand that he should have a pension deserves to become historic. "I told him that not having committed any basenesses, I had no need of the consolation of favours." He did himself no small harm by the contempt which he could not hide from those he did not esteem. Contrarily his friendships were irrefragable, and he succeeded in preserving the attachment of all his friends except one. "I am amorous of friendship," he confesses, but self-interest was not the motive of this desire of the love of others. "It is as impossible for me to cultivate the goodwill of any one in the service of any interest as to fly in the air." Another quality, to which he owed the attachment of his friends, was his freedom from vindictive feelings. "I pardon easily by reason of the fact that I am not inclined to hate any one." He professed a natural love for the good and honour of his country rather than for what is called its glory, and he always experienced a secret joy over any action that tended to the common good. He places the good of his family above his own personal advantage, of his fatherland above that of his family, and would regard the performance of what was useful to his country but prejudicial to Europe as a crime. A good citizen is content with his lot, and loves the government under which he is born without fearing it. Rather a meek type of citizen, who is evidently somewhat inclined to regard with resignation the rampant abuses of the day, and absorb himself for comfort in the "Esprit des Lois" of other days.[1]

Passing from the man to his works, the reader is struck in the first of them, the "Lettres Persanes"[2] (1721), by the boldness of

[1] The self-drawn portrait will be found in tom. i. of the Œuvres Complètes, Paris, 1862.

[2] First published anonymously in Holland.

the ridicule which the author directed against the social and religious conventions of the time, and by the intellectual force which vindicated justice and humanity. The interest they excited is evidenced by the fact that several editions were called for in the year of their publication. The Paris of the regency laughed heartily at these Persian sallies, and the government made no embarrassing inquiries about their authorship, though the secret was soon known to the man in the street. They even won the author, in 1727, a place in the Academy after he had taken measures to disarm the scruples of Cardinal Fleury by, it is said, placing the compromising passages to the credit of the Dutch publisher, and presenting the cardinal with an expurged copy.

The "Considerations sur les Causes de la Grandeur des Romains et de leur Décadence" appeared in 1734. To the Dutch press was again due the honour of first publishing this second product of Montesquieu's genius, which, like the "Lettres Persanes," was anonymous. Very significant commentary on the amount of liberty of thought allowed in the France of Fleury and Louis XV. that a work, which, while replete with moral reflections, was an attempt to unfold, in strict historic method, the genius, development, and decay of a great people, could only seek the light of publicity in furtive fashion. Historical truth, it appears, is still measured by the standard of a superstitious voluptuary who happens to be king, and a prudent, time-serving priest who happens to be prime minister. Historical science might be laborious and dry as dust; it might not presume to be independent and original, and accordingly the "Considerations" must go to Holland for an illegitimate birth. The merit of the work gained it, however, the *privilége du roi* in the following year, and despotism might legitimately read its doom in the revelation of the law, enforced in noble language, that "liberty is the life of nations, despotism their death."[1] Its popularity was immense and permanent, and it helped materially to intensify that passionate admiration for republican liberty and virtue, which grew into a fashion with the advancing century.[2]

It was not till 1748 that the "Esprit des Lois," the fruit of twenty years of patient labour, which had sapped the strength of its author, now verging on sixty, was issued from the press of Barillot at Geneva. It ran through twenty-two editions in eighteen months, and evoked a

[1] See Laboulaye, Preface to the Considerations in tom. ii. of Montesquieu's Œuvres (1875-79). This is the latest and best edition of the works.

[2] Montesquieu had an intense love of antiquity; see Pensées Diverses in Œuvres (1863), ii. 424.

symphony of applause which the carping hostility of the Sorbonne did not materially disturb, though it caused the timid, circumspect philosopher some uneasy days. The Sorbonne refrained from damning the book, though it contained a passionate plea for toleration, and shocked the co-religionists of Bossuet by ignoring the Bible. The ecclesiastical journalists were less reasonable, and decried the author as an atheist, and he had the additional honour of being placed on the Index at Rome. In revenge, Montesquieu could console himself with the reflection that all cultured Europe were his readers, while nobody seems to have been startled by the awful judgment of the pedants of the papal congregation.

Its motto, "Prolem sine matre creatam," is hardly correct, for the trace of some of his precursors in political philosophy, of Aristotle, Bodin, Hobbes, is patent to the observant eye. Yet its plan and its execution are sufficiently original to warrant its claim to be the independent contribution of a mind which had studied history widely and pondered deeply. Montesquieu tells us himself how he worked at it. "On leaving college, I got law-books put into my hands. I sought the spirit of them: I worked; I did nothing of any value. It is twenty years since I discovered my principles; they are very simple. . . . I have many times begun this work, and as often abandoned it. I have scattered to the winds a thousand times the leaves I have written. . . . I followed my object without forming a design. I knew neither the rules nor the exceptions. I found the truth only to lose it. But when I discovered my principles, everything that I sought came to me, and in the course of twenty years I saw my work commence, increase, advance, and finish."[1]

Its main idea is expressed in its title—"The Spirit of the Laws"—and he explains it himself in the first book. Law, according to Montesquieu, is not accidental, but necessary. In the general sense "laws are the necessary relations which derive from the nature of things."[2] In this sense the universe is subject to laws on which its existence and conservation depend. Man, in particular, is subject to laws, even before he has made them. Justice is anterior to positive law. It is, in spite of Hobbes, inherent in human nature. Given a human society, there are certain relations of equity applicable to it, which positive laws do not create, but only recognise. It is only ignorance or weakness that makes man fail to realise or follow these relations. Even in a state of nature man is thus subject to laws. In contrast to Hobbes, he holds that, in this state, peace,

[1] Laboulaye's Introduction to tom. iii. of Œuvres.
[2] Liv. i., c. 1.

arising from the feeling of timidity and weakness, not war, is the general law; others are self-preservation, sexual attraction, and sociality. With the development from the state of nature equality and peace cease, and the state of war, arising from the consciousness of power in individuals and nations, and the desire of aggrandisement in both, commences. Hence the origin of legislation, which is threefold, as it deals with nations, subjects, citizens. Accordingly law is international—regulating the rights of peoples; political—regulating the affairs of the society; civil—regulating the rights of the citizen.

In general, law is reason applied to the government of human society, but as the laws are relative to the people for which they are made, they are susceptible of great variety. They vary in accordance with established government, the physical features of the country, the mode of life of its inhabitants, their religion, their number, their occupation, manner, character, etc. They are related, too, to their own origin, to the object of the legislator, to the order of things in which they are established. It is this variety that he calls "the spirit of the laws," and the object of his work is to unfold its presence and effects in human history.

His method is historic, but it is not sufficiently so, and it is not adequately scientific. He is apt at times to look only at some of the historical facts and to leave out of view others equally important. He limits himself, for instance, in considering republics, to Greece and ancient and mediæval Italy, and he takes as his type of monarchy that of mediæval France. He does not give sufficient emphasis to the modern spirit, which has far outrun both ancient and mediæval history. True, he diagnoses the modern spirit in the English constitution, but even the English constitution did not fully embody that spirit. What, for instance, of the Dutch republic, or the old democratic constitution of Spain, not to mention the American democracy, which did not exist when he wrote, but which only exemplified democratic tendencies already illustrated in history? His knowledge of Oriental history is, too, neither comprehensive nor accurate, and thus his diagnosis of despotism is at times historically unsatisfactory.

Scientifically, too, his method is weak, because he has not clearly grasped the fact of political and social evolution. He is apt to mistake for law what is incidental, as for instance; when he propounds the doctrine that it is a fundamental law of democracy to divide the people into classes. He forgets that this is only a fundamental law of Greek democracy, and that the tendency of democracy is really to

abolish class distinctions. This narrowness of view, arising from the lack of comprehension of a great principle, is one of the most unsatisfactory features of the work. With a larger knowledge and a greater breadth of view one cannot escape at times the feeling that his work is antiquated, though it is full of profound reflections and apposite maxims. His generalisations are often wrong because his method, in the words of a modern writer, led him to discover, "not the general laws of the facts, but certain specific reasons of them."[1] But then the science of comparative legislation, like the science of comparative religion, was hardly yet born, and this comparison is the only method that leads to a true general explanation.

His method has been subjected to criticism on the very ground that it was historic. Some of his critics, Rousseau in the foreground have condemned the author because he did not attempt to do what they would have preferred that he should. It is the old story of misapprehending the scope and purpose of a work, and damning it accordingly. Montesquieu, they insist, should not have limited himself to the enquiry how reason found expression in a vast complexity of laws. He should have inquired whether reason always acted in accordance with the principles of justice, and shown what laws could have embodied this quality. He should have treated not what was, but what should have been. In that case, we might have had a "Contrat Social," or a digest of natural law. We should not have had a monumental work of historical generalisation like the "Esprit des Lois." Montesquieu had reason to complain, "It is not *my* book that they criticise, but one which they have in their heads."[2] But it is not correct to say that Montesquieu is a pure scientist, and does not indicate in the course of his work what he regards as just as well as actual. He may not do this sufficiently, and he ignores the fact of progress, but he occasionally judges as well as diagnoses the phenomena with which he deals. He reveals, as we shall see, an impatience of despotism, a warm sympathy with political liberty, of which he is the staunch champion, and an intense love of justice and humanity.

The discussion of the state of nature and the origin of society leads to that of government, which he does not, like Bossuet, limit, in its original form, to that of a single individual. He distinguishes between the nature and the principle of government. All governments may be reduced to three kinds—republican, in which the people, or part of the people, possesses sovereign power; monarchic, or the government by one person by fixed and established laws

[1] Flint, Philosophy of History in France, 268.

[2] See Laboulaye, Introd., tom. iii. of Œuvres.

and despotic, in which the ruler is unrestrained by any other law than that of his own will.[1] A republic may be democratic, or aristocratic. It is democratic when the whole people possesses the sovereign power, aristocratic when that power is in the possession of only a part. The fundamental laws of democracy, whose type he seeks chiefly in ancient Greece, are those which establish the rights and methods of suffrage. The people, which has a real capacity for recognising merit, should make the laws and elect its magistrates, but should not govern. It should leave the execution of the laws to a council or senate. It is advisable to divide the people into classes. On this division, which forms another fundamental law of democracy, depends the stability of this kind of government, in which he would give a predominating influence to capacity and merit. He is not afraid of popular power thus wisely wielded. "The people which exercises sovereign power ought to do itself all that it can do well. What it cannot itself do well, it ought to do by its ministers."[2] The ideal democracy is thus one in which class and wealth predominate (his limitation of view to ancient forms of government appears prominently in this trait), but in which confidence in the people is emphasised. It is very different from the ideal democracy of Rousseau and the revolutionists with their insistence on manhood suffrage apart from class distinction, and popular intervention in the work of government, of which more anon.

The leaning in favour of as large a measure of popular control as possible appears in the remarks on the aristocratic form of government, of which Venice furnishes him with a model. The best aristocracy is that which approaches most nearly to democracy, that is, includes as large as possible a proportion of the people. Contrarily, the nearer it approaches to monarchy, the less serviceable is it. The most imperfect of all is that in which, as in Poland, the greater part of the people is in a state of slavery to those who rule.[3] Monarchy, on the other hand, of which the type is that of France, and in which the prince is the source of all power, political and civil, and exercises it in accordance with the laws, involves intermediate, subordinate, and dependent powers, as channels of the supreme power. The nobility is the most natural intermediate power, yea, so necessary, in his opinion, is nobility to monarchy that he hazards the maxim, No monarchy, no nobility; no nobility, no monarchy, and finds the abolition of such intermediate powers between people and monarch, as clergy, nobility, Third Estate, very questionable policy. They serve too useful a function as a counterpoise to absolute power to make

[1] Liv. ii., c. 1. [2] Liv. ii., c. 2 [3] Liv. ii., c. 3.

their extinction as a rule advisable. Even the power of the clergy, which is dangerous to a republic, and of which he has otherwise no admiration,[1] is serviceable in a monarchy, as in Spain and Portugal, where it forms the only check on despotism. In addition to such subordinate powers, there must be a body which conserves the laws, *i.e.*, the Parliaments, as in France. For this function neither the nobility nor the Council of State is suitable, the former being too ignorant and too contemptuous of the work of administration, the latter not possessing sufficiently the confidence of the nation. Strangely enough, he has no place for the States-General, which embodied the constitutional activity of the three orders or subordinate powers of the State. The States-General were out of date, and Montesquieu, in ignoring them, appears as the champion of the Parliaments, which aimed at usurping their functions. Montesquieu's typical monarchy is thus a moderate feudal monarchy, though, as we shall see, he prefers the British constitution, which had abandoned these feudal intermediate powers, as they existed in France, in the cause of political liberty. But in his opinion, if the English should lose their liberty, the absence of these powers would make them the most slavish people on earth. It should not be overlooked that the emphasis which he lays on them springs from a democratic feeling in favour of liberty as against an arbitrary *régime*.[2]

In a despotic State, such as Turkey or Persia, which Montesquieu had in his mind, the power of one is unchecked by any subordinate or dependent power. His hatred of despotism appears in the dark picture which he draws of this form of government, abandoned to the brutal caprice of a lazy, voluptuous, and ignorant potentate, who is himself the slave of his passions, while lord of millions of slaves, without a council to enlighten him in affairs, with no care other than that of the gratification of sensual self-will.

From the nature he turns to the principle of each form of government. He is struck with the fact—and the reflection is a profound one—that each form of government has something peculiar to it that makes it go. This distinctive principle, or motive power, consists in a republic in virtue, in the sense of public spirit, self-sacrificing love of country. It is most operative in the democratic form of republic, and its decay has been responsible for the fall of every ancient democracy.[3] Virtue also holds in an aristocracy, more particularly the virtue of moderation. The principle of monarchy, on the other hand, is not virtue, but honour, or better expressed,

[1] See Pensées Diverses, Œuvres (1863), ii. 429.
[2] Liv. ii., c. 4. [3] Liv. iii., c. 3, 4.

perhaps, interest. The courtier is actuated by the desire to win the favour of the monarch. The clergy, the nobility, the magistracy, has each its interest or prejudice to serve equally with the monarch. Honour joined to the force of the law may, he thinks, fulfil the end of government equally well with virtue.[1] The ambition which lies at the root of honour is dangerous in a republic, but not in a monarchy, where it can be repressed within safe bounds.[2] In a despotism neither virtue nor honour has any place. Its principle is fear, and the only incentive to resistance lies in religion.[3]

The laws of education vary with the principle of each form of government. Education in a monarchy is merely, in Montesquieu's view, the system which produced the French noblesse of the old *régime*, certainly a very artificial product. It consists in investing the virtues with a certain nobility, habits with a certain freedom, manners with a certain politeness. The result is to form a society gentleman of the eighteenth century, but not, we fear, in all respects a man. Montesquieu depicts the creation of convention and prejudice, not the product of sane principles. Happily for his commonsense he takes care to add in a note that he is depicting what is, in the France of his day—not what ought to be.

In despotic states education hardly exists. Knowledge is dangerous to despotism. Its end, such as it is, is to teach men to be good slaves, and to make a good slave one must begin by making a bad subject.

Education is the grand requisite in a republic, which involves the practice of self-sacrifice, the love of country, and of the laws before self. To inspire this love is the grand end of republican education. But even republican antiquity was limited by its environment, and Montesquieu forgets to point out that its educational system was deficient in rationality and humanity. The tendency to misunderstand or overestimate Greek institutions is nearly as strong in him as in Rousseau and the men of the Revolution.

In regard, next, to the legislation relative to the principle of each government, he deduces from that of virtue in democracies the love of equality and frugality, which the law must recognise and enforce. In aristocracies the law should encourage the spirit of moderation, which seeks to maintain equality and frugality, and prevent the baneful effects of the jealousies between those who govern and those who are governed. In a monarchy, on the other hand, equality can have no place. The hereditary rights and privileges of the nobility are, he thinks, essential to its existence, and may not be shared by the

[1] Liv. iii., c. 5, 6. [2] Liv. iii., c. 7. [3] Liv. iii., c. 9, 10.

people. Even feudal burdens must be borne for the sake of their utility to the monarchic system. Perhaps the reader will better understand, in view of such deliverances, our conclusion that the philosophy of the "Esprit des Lois" is, in some of its parts, rather antiquated.

The monarchic government, though less fitted to foster public spirit, has a great advantage over the republican. The execution of the laws by one individual is more prompt. Nevertheless, as this promptitude may become precipitate, it is well to moderate it by, say, the right of remonstrance invested in the Parliaments of France.[1] The monarchic government is, too, superior to the despotic in point of stability. The various orders tend to strengthen its constitution, whereas under a despotism there is no intermediate scaffolding to support the public edifice. Despotisms are therefore particularly liable to revolutions, monarchies to civil wars.[2] Despotism is especially obnoxious to the legal mind of the ex-president *à mortier* of the Parliament of Bordeaux, and he takes the opportunity once more to picture its withering effects on the people in the darkest touches. When life and property are under the protection of no law, security and prosperity are impossible. "When the savages of Louisiana desire some fruit, they cut down the tree and then pull the fruit. Such is despotic government."[3]

Dealing, next, with the jurisprudence consequent on the different principles of government, he demonstrates that in a monarchy the laws are more complex than in a despotism. The despot governs by his will, the monarch by the laws which deal with a vast complexity of rights, distinctions, interests, arising from the difference of rank and order. Similarly, in a republic the laws are complex, for in a republic the protection of the honour, life, property, liberty of the citizen is a matter of the first importance. Where there are no civil rights, as in a despotism, there are no laws. Only in a monarchy or a republic is there a code of laws, and only in accordance with this code is justice dispensed. In a monarchy the king may not act as judge, because he is the accuser, and should not be both judge and prosecutor. Special commissions of justice in which the king takes part, as in France, appear to Montesquieu a travesty of justice, and explain his hatred of Richelieu. As to punishments, the wise legislator "will seek less to punish than to prevent crimes."[4] Severity accords better with a despotism, whose principle is fear, than with a monarchy or a republic, whose principles are honour and virtue, and it would be easy to prove that in all, or nearly all European States

[1] Liv. v., c. 10. [2] Liv. v., c. 11. [3] Liv. v., c. 13. [4] Liv. vi., c. 9.

penalties have increased or diminished in severity, according as liberty has been encouraged or repressed. "In despotic States the people is so miserable that they fear death more than they regret life. Punishment ought, therefore, to be more rigorous." Cruelty reigns in despotism, mildness in moderate monarchies. "Follow nature, which has given to men shame as their castigator, and let the greatest part of the punishment be the infamy of suffering it."[1] Tyranny destroys shame, and torture is an abomination, a crime against nature.

Next, as to the consequences of the different principles of government in relation to luxury, sumptuary laws, and the condition of women, our philosopher posits that equality of riches forms the excellence of a republic. The less there is of luxury, which consists in the excess of what is physically necessary, in such a government, the nearer is it to perfection. In the aristocratic government everything contrary to the spirit of moderation ought to be banished. In monarchies, on the other hand, where riches are unequal, luxury is essential. The expenditure of the rich maintains the poor, and if the rich do not spend much, the people will die of hunger. Republics die of luxury, monarchies of poverty. In certain cases, however, in the interest of frugality, for instance, sumptuary laws are beneficial to a monarchy.

The principles of the three governments have often been corrupted. Most significant are the remarks on the corruption of the principles of democracy. Burke evidently drew on Montesquieu in his forecast of the march of the French Revolution, for Montesquieu shows with remarkable sagacity the baneful tendency of the vice of ill-regulated democracies to produce despotism. The principle of democracy is corrupted not merely when the practice of equality is lost, but when the spirit of extreme equality shows itself on the part of any citizen to resist command. Anarchy is the inevitable result. "The people usurps the functions of the magistrates, who are consequently no longer respected. The deliberations of the senate have no longer weight, and the senate ceases to enjoy consideration."[2] While the spirit of inequality leads to aristocracy, or the government of several, the spirit of extreme equality leads to the despotism of one, and this despotism ends in turn in conquest, *i.e.*, in military despotism—Napoleon!

The principle of the monarchy is corrupted when the prerogatives of the various orders are taken away, when, that is, the prince absorbs the State, when he seeks to show his power by changing rather than

[1] Liv. vi., c. 12. [2] Liv. viii., c. 2.

following the order of things, when he despises the love of the people and mistakes severity for justice, when dignities cease to be honours and infamy may wear them.[1]

Montesquieu's doctrines on the nature and respective principles of government are not above criticism. The intervening century and a half since he wrote have increased our knowledge, and this increase of knowledge, apart from errors of method, must modify our estimate of some of these doctrines. His survey is too limited, his data too insufficient to be exhaustive. His types of monarchy, republic, despotism cannot be regarded as the embodiment of all monarchic, republican, and despotic governments. His monarchic type, for instance, is at best but a special phase of monarchy, and it was not to be the monarchy of the future, even for France. In less than fifty years it was to be swept away by the Revolution, and when it reappeared, it was in a greatly modified form. His monarchy was thus a spider's web, which the Revolution was to sweep away, not a permanent fact based on eternal truth. He does not, on the one hand, make allowance for the accidents, let us rather say the evolution of history; he mistakes at times, on the other, the accidental for the permanent.

Further, his divisions of the governments are confused, because they are not sufficiently differentiated. Under the republic, he embraces democracy and aristocracy. In the former the people is sovereign, in the latter only a part of the people. There is thus a radical difference between the conception of the sovereignty in the one case and the other. If a State is governed by a part of the people, by the few, it is a distinctly different State from the one that is governed by the whole, the many. By the exclusion of the people from power, the aristocratic State is more nearly related to monarchy than to democracy. Again, in separating monarchy as a distinct type from despotism, he does not reckon with the fact that monarchy, aristocracy, and even democracy may be and have been despotisms. His monarch is absolute, though he governs by the laws. But he is not compelled to do so, since he alone is sovereign, and if his power is limited by some constraining force, he is no longer absolute but merely the head of a limited government which may be aristocratic or democratic, or a mixture of both. Moreover, there is no absolutely arbitrary government, such as a despotism pure and simple, which can be taken as the type of a certain form of State. Montesquieu is mistaken in asserting that there is no law in Oriental governments, even if there be not a constitution. As Voltaire put it, "monarchy

[1] Liv. viii., c. 6, 7.

and despotism are two brothers who have so many points of resemblance that we often mistake the one for the other. They are two large cats on whose necks the rats have tried to hang a handbell." Despotism is only an abuse of monarchy, as demagogy is of democracy, and oligarchy of aristocracy.[1] Aristotle's division into States governed by one, several, or many is logically preferable. Each division is capable of subdivision—the government by one into monarchy and its abuse, despotism; the government by several into aristocracy and its abuse, oligarchy; the government of the many into democracy and its abuse, demagogy. Such a division thus embraces every type of historical State, and avoids the overlapping of which that of Montesquieu is susceptible. It may, however, be said that Montesquieu made his division on purely historical, not on logical grounds. His aim was to draw a distinction of the forms of government characteristic of the East, classical antiquity, and the more modern European nations. It is in this sense that the "Esprit des Lois" must be read,[2] but that does not place it above the objection of being faulty in its diagnosis of fundamental laws.

His generalisation of the principles characteristic of each form of government is equally defective. Civic virtue, which consists in the love of country and of the laws, is certainly a principle of democracy, but the love of country and of the laws, as a motive power, is not confined to democracy. It would be easy to prove from the history of France that in Montesquieu's type of monarchy patriotism played a great *rôle* in unifying and conserving the State. On the other hand, the principle of honour which is the motive force of monarchies, and may be interpreted in its widest sense of self-interest,[3] is not one incompatible with a democracy, since it is a principle of human nature, and necessarily comes into play under every form of government that leaves scope for individual action. The ambition to obtain an administrative office, for instance, is not exceptional in a democracy, to judge, say, from the case of the United States of America. Honour in this sense influences more or less the citizens of all States except those of Utopia itself. Even in its narrower meaning of a "prejudice," derived from pride or self-respect, it is characteristic of an aristocracy as well as of a monarchy. Nay, honour is in a certain sense a virtue and in this sense is common to monarchy, aristocracy, democracy, in other words, to mankind. Similarly, moderation is not the exclusive property of aristocracy.

[1] See Janet, Hist. de la Science Politique, ii. 343-346.
[2] See Laboulaye's Introduction to tom. iii. of Œuvres.
[3] Montesquieu speaks of it in one place as "ambition."

It is, moreover, not a principle, but a restraint, and its restraining influence is indispensable to monarchies and democracies as well as aristocracies.

Criticism apart, and taking Montesquieu's three governments as he conceives them, there can hardly be any hesitation as to which is the preferable government. Political virtue is so superior to any other motive force, that one virtually wishes that all the world were republican, as Montesquieu conceives the republic. His book was bound to wield on the reader a subtle influence in favour of free self-government, not unimportant in view of the future. That its author intended it to serve this practical purpose is, I think, a safe conclusion. He wished to teach by the logic of facts, if not with the fervour of the tribune. Enlighten the people, and government will be enlightened, seems to be his theory of practical politics. "It is not a matter of indifference," he insists, "that the people be enlightened."[1] In this remark alone there is the germ of future revolution, gradual at least, if not violent. Let the light in, and much of the mummy fabric of absolutism must crumble to dust. Political virtue may, of course, consist with monarchic government, as we to-day understand it, but reverting to the age of Montesquieu, with its trend towards centralisation, with its autocratic methods, and its violent encroachment on civic liberty by *lettres de cachet*, special commissions of justice, etc., the spontaneous reflection of generous minds would be "Vive la republique." To that class of minds, which place reality above form, the "Esprit des Lois" undoubtedly communicated an impulse in favour of republicanism, and even revolution. It is replete with the sense of human rights and human dignity. While he diagnoses the old monarchy, as tempered by its feudal orders and its Parliaments, it is evident that he regards the centralisation achieved by Richelieu and Louis XIV. as a dangerous development towards despotism. See, he says in effect, whither we are tending—to slavery and impotence. This is his effective, if indirect message, to his age. To find an antidote he turns to the English constitution, and his exposition of that constitution which conjoins liberty with monarchy, is an indirect protest against the absolutism hostile to liberty, and dangerous to monarchy.

It is in the eleventh book, on "the laws in relation to the constitution," that he discourses on English political institutions, which he had studied on the spot with such sympathetic keenness. In lucid and admiring language he sketches what he evidently regards as a model of political wisdom. This constitution is the develop

[1] See preface to Œuvres Complètes (Paris, 1862), p. 2.

ment of the Germano-feudal political system, which culminated in the enfranchisement of the Third Estate, and is the best tempered government that ever existed. The absolute government of the later Valois and Bourbon kings was a decided retrogression, in his eyes, from the government of king and three Estates. Richelieu was, in fact, the worst citizen France ever had. Our author overlooks the fact of feudal anarchy and oppressive privilege which must tend to modify this sweeping condemnation of the great cardinal. As perfected in England, it is superior even to the equilibrium of mediæval monarchy. In a word, "it is the best species of government that men have been able to imagine."[1] At that date it merited the eulogy, though it was capable of improvement in some respects, as we now know, and Locke, in his sketch of a constitution, had already improved on it on paper. Political liberty, not equality, is the distinguishing mark of the British constitution. This liberty consists in the ability to do what one ought to will, and not to be constrained to do what one ought not to will. This is generally true, but it would have been more satisfactory had he added that there are things which the law ought not to restrain one from doing, and that liberty consists in the unrestrained performance of these things. The spirit of legality must mingle with the spirit of liberty. Liberty and even equality, must be subordinate to the law. "Political liberty is only to be found in moderate States, and in moderate States it only exists when power is not abused. It is an eternal experience that every one who has the power tends to abuse it. . . . Virtue even has need of limits."[2] Power must limit power, if liberty is to be assured. Such is the root conception of the celebrated theory of the separation of the three powers. This theory is not original to Montesquieu, but he showed its scope and effects in actual practice discovered it, that is, in the English constitution. In England the grand expedient against the abuse of power is the separation of the executive, legislative, and judicial powers. Under such a constitution the people has its share of power, but the people cannot legislate in a body; it must do by representatives what it cannot do itself. "The grand advantage of representatives is that they are capable of discussing affairs. For this duty the people is not at all fitted, and this is one of the great inconveniences of democracies." The popular representatives, he insists, in words that might serve as a direct contradiction of Rousseau, must be allowed a certain amount of liberty of initiative. "It is not necessary that the representatives who have received from their constituents a general mandate, should

[1] Liv. xii., c. 8. [2] Liv. xi., c. 4.

receive a particular mandate as to each affair, as is the practice in the Diets of Germany. It is true that in this way the voice of the deputies would be more exactly the expression of the will of the people, but this would cause infinite delays, would render each deputy the master of the other, and on pressing occasions the whole force of the nation would be arrested by a caprice." In the matter of suffrage, he is more elastic than the English constitution of his day. "All the citizens in their representative districts should have the right to vote in the choice of a representative, except those who are in such a state of lowness that they are esteemed to have no will of their own." The right to choose its representatives belongs to the people, but to the representative body is reserved the function of making laws. He admits, however, a non-representative body, viz., the assembly of those distinguished by wealth, birth, or honour, whose duty it is to moderate the action of the people and its representatives. The reason of this distinction lies in the fact that if this class was confounded among the people, the common liberty would be their slavery. They would have no interest to defend it, the greater part of legislation being detrimental to their class. The legislative power will thus be confided, in a State whose end is political liberty, to two bodies, one representative, the other aristocratic, and each deliberating apart. But as a hereditary body might tend to pursue its own interests and forget those of the people, it should only possess the power of veto, not of legislation, or the right of ordaining by itself. While the legislative power is thus divided between nobles and commons, the executive belongs to neither, but to the monarch, this part of government, which demands promptitude, being better performed by one than by several; whilst, on the other hand, the legislative function is better performed by several than by one. Even a body specially selected from the legislature would not serve this end. To confide the executive (he evidently means the supreme) power to a certain number of persons drawn from the legislature, would be to destroy liberty, because both functions would be united.

The legislative power must be assembled at frequent intervals in order to avoid anarchy, on the one hand, and absolutism on the other. In the first case legislation would cease; in the second, it would be absorbed by the executive power. The legislature should not, however, be always in session in order to obviate the risk of friction between it and the executive, with which it may not interfere, nor have the power to convene or dissolve itself, in order to prevent it becoming a despotism. But if the

legislature has not the right of veto over the acts of the executive, it has the right to examine how the laws, which it has made, have been executed. It has not the power to judge the monarch. The executive, as represented in his person, is inviolable, because his person is necessary in order that the legislature may not become tyrannic, which it would become the moment he is accused or judged. His ministers, by whose counsel he acts, may, however, be tried and punished. The executive has the right to exercise a veto over legislation, but not to legislate itself. Otherwise liberty would be in as great danger as it would be by the absence of a veto in the executive.

"This then," concludes our philosopher, "is the fundamental constitution of this government. The legislative body being composed of two parts, the one checks the other by the mutual faculty of veto Both are bound by the executive, which is itself bound by the legislature." Of our philosopher's warm admiration for that governmen there is ample evidence, yet the fear of the censor may be noted i the characteristic remark with which he seeks to tone down th eulogy. "I do not pretend by this exposition to lower other govern ments, or to say that this extreme political liberty should mortif those who possess but a moderate liberty. How should I say so I who believe that the excess even of reason is not always desirable and that men accommodate themselves almost always better to th medium than to the extreme." Assuredly a rather lame conclusio after such evident appreciation of a liberty at once large and safe But then Montesquieu is at bottom a timid, diffident, and very ci cumspect nature.

Montesquieu's theory of the English constitution is not the theor of a mixed government, embracing a combination of monarchy, aris tocracy, and democracy. It is the theory of the separation of th three powers of government, which may be common to all thre kinds of government, though Montesquieu did not perceive it application to a republic, and asserts that there is no politica liberty in this sense in a democracy (understanding by democracy a constitution in which the three powers are not separated). He assumes, indeed, a hereditary monarchy and an aristocracy as essential to this form of government. The assumption constitutes one of these errors of generalisation which occur often enough in the course of the work. The people in so pure a democracy as that of the United States constructed a political constitution which admits of the separation of the three powers in the interest of liberty, and is yet the expression of pure democracy. But is not this separation

contrary to the sovereignty of the people? cry the advocates of democracy. Certainly not. Even under the British constitution the people is practically sovereign, since the supreme power really resides in the majority of Parliament, which represents the people. But for reasons of expediency it is necessary to regulate the exercise of power in the State. Hence the system of checks to even the power of the majority. Theoretically the State, the people, is sovereign, and though Montesquieu does not say so, its power is unlimited, as Hobbes long ago pointed out. Practically the exercise of that power, whether in a modern democracy or a popular monarchy, is limited in the interest of liberty, and this limit is necessary in the interest of good government. It is the recognition of this fact of limitation on practical grounds that lends a great advantage to Montesquieu's theory over that of Rousseau, who posits the absolute sovereignty of the people (in which he is theoretically correct) without sufficiently safeguarding the interests of the individual, and without due regard to the practical work of government. It has in truth all the advantage of a system, based on experience, over one based on mere theory, divorced from experience, and therefore, as time was to show, unworkable, and essentially pernicious. Montesquieu deserves great credit for expounding a system which was at once favourable to liberty and compatible with serviceable government, though capable of improvement in details. Unfortunately the future revolutionary legislators did not recognise his merit as a sagacious statesman as well as a profound philosopher. They might be under no obligation to recognise the distinction of the "mother of parliaments," and transfer the system of one country to another, but they might have learned the lesson of moderation as the secret of successful government.

In treating of the laws in relation to personal liberty,[1] he has some excellent additional remarks on the criminal laws, a subject which he accounts of more importance to the human race than anything else in the world.[2] The penalty, he holds, should be derived from the nature of the crime, not from the caprice of the lawgiver. He specifies four kinds of crimes—those which shock the religion, the manners, the tranquillity, the security of the citizens. He is a decided opponent of religious persecution and the punishment of sacrilege by temporal penalties. The only punishment he will allow is the deprivation of the benefits of religion. The liberty of the subject, the right of conscience must be respected. The barbarities perpetrated in the name of religion arise from the idea that it is

[1] Liv. xii. [2] Liv. xii., c. 2.

necessary to avenge the Deity.[1] This idea is radically wrong. We should not avenge, but honour the Deity. Similarly crimes against manners should be punished by the loss of the advantages of society, that is, by expulsion from the city, etc.; those against tranquillity by imprisonment, exile, etc.; those against security by death, if the attempt be against life, by loss of property, if against property. He would fain see the cessation of prosecution for heresy and sorcery, as accusations of this kind are very dangerous to liberty, owing to the vagaries of popular prejudice or ignorance. Here again he feels on dangerous ground, and characteristically interjects a palliating explanation. "I have not said that heresy ought not to be punished" (that is his opinion all the same); "I say it is necessary to be very circumspect in punishing it." He does not set forth this fundamental principle of liberty in defiance of his age. He is so far an opportunist, but there is no mistaking what he would say on such points if he felt free to say it. Further, as in books xxiv. and xxv., where he returns to the subject, his protest against the barbarity of religious persecution rises into something like passionate earnestness. He introduces a Jew defending the principle of toleration against the Spanish Inquisition. "You live," exclaims the persecuted Jew, "in an age in which the light of nature shines more brightly than ever it has done, in which philosophy has enlightened men's minds, in which the morality of the gospel is better known, the rights of men over each other, and the empire of one conscience over another better established. If, therefore, you do not recede from your old prejudices, which are merely your passions, one must confess that you are incorrigible, incapable of all light and all instruction, and a nation is indeed unfortunate that confers authority on men such as you. . . . We must warn you of one thing. If any of your posterity dares say that, in the century in which we live, the peoples of Europe were civilised, others will point to you to prove that they were barbarians, and the idea that men will have of you will be such as to damn your age and excite the hatred of all your contemporaries."[2]

He condemns, too, political persecution, especially the excessive punishment of the crime of *lèse majesté*. To doubt the judgment of princes, to call in question the merit of their ministers, should not be accounted a crime at all. Cinq Mars, for instance, should not have been punished for *lèse majesté* for merely conspiring the fall of Richelieu, nor should a man have been condemned for high treason in England for merely predicting the death of the king. "I do not

[1] For his rationalistic views on religion see also Pensées Diverses.

[2] Liv. xxiv., c. 13.

pretend," he again characteristically interjects, "to minimise the indignation we ought to cherish against those who seek to sully the reputation of the prince, but I certainly say that if you wish to moderate despotism, a simple correctional punishment will suffice better in such cases than an accusation of *lèse majesté*, always terrible to the innocent." The criticism of the administration of the sovereign ought not to come under the category of crimes. It is pure presumption on the part of the sovereign to assume that he should have a monopoly of privilege and immunity. "I cannot understand how princes believe so easily that they are everything, and how the peoples are so ready to believe that they are nothing." Nothing was more fatal to Roman liberty than the ordinance of Tiberius making it a crime to express freely an opinion of his rule. Still more dangerous is such persecuting severity to the stability of a republic, and here, as in other points bearing on the rights and liberties of the subject, a Robespierre might have studied Montesquieu to advantage. His knowledge of history and human nature are so profound that he becomes prophetic without intending to be so. "When a republic has succeeded in destroying those who wish to overturn it, it is necessary to put a period to vengeance as speedily as possible. One cannot mete out severe punishments, and consequently cause great changes, without putting into the hands of certain citizens a large amount of power. It is more advisable in such a case to pardon much than to punish much, to leave property untouched than to multiply confiscations. Under the pretext of avenging the republic, the avengers will establish their own tyranny. The question is not to destroy those who predominate, but their predomination. It is necessary to return as soon as possible to the ordinary course of government, in which the laws protect all and are not an arm against any one." In Greece and Rome the demagogue became the dictator on the specious pretext of ensuring the liberty and good of the republic. The formulas of proscription were the sophisms of cruelty and selfishness. There are indeed cases when the laws may be suspended for the sake of the safety of all, when it is necessary to cast for a little a veil over liberty, as the ancients veiled the statues of the gods.

He does not limit himself to denunciations of Roman and Greek demagogues. He has some pertinent advices on government to give to the monarchs of his own time, some of them barbed with ill-disguised thrusts at the abuses of the *régime* of Louis XV. The whole felicity of monarchies consists in the opinion which the people has of the mildness of the government. The sovereign must encourage,

and only the laws menace. He ought always to be accessible to the people, and his manners are as important to liberty as the laws. He may make beasts of men or men of beasts. If he loves free souls he will have subjects, if he loves mean souls he will have slaves. Would he know the grand art of government, let him surround himself with honour and virtue, let him value men of merit and not fear them as rivals. He is their equal the moment he loves them. Let him gain the heart, but not shackle the mind. Let him render himself popular, and be flattered by the love of his subjects,—they, too, are men. The people demand so little consideration that it is only just in him to accord it. Let him beware of oppressive taxation. Excessive taxation is simply another name for servitude. "We call him no longer a great minister who is the prudent dispenser of the public treasury, but the industrious official who finds what are called expedients."[1] The maintenance of vast armies is equally incompatible with the prosperity of the nation. "A new malady has spread throughout Europe; it has seized our princes and caused the maintenance of an extravagant number of troops. It has its paroxysms, and it becomes necessarily contagious. As soon as one State augments its troops, the others suddenly follow its example, and thus contribute to the common ruin. Each monarch keeps on foot as large an army as if his people were in danger of extermination. And forsooth they call peace this state of effort of all against all. . . . We are poor even with the wealth and commerce of the universe to enrich us, and soon by reason of having soldiers we shall have nothing but soldiers, and shall become like the Tartars. The great monarchs, not content with buying the troops of the small, seek on all sides to buy alliances, in other words to throw away their money. The consequences of such a situation is the perpetual augmentation of taxes, and by frustrating all future remedies, they count no longer on their revenues, but make war with their capital. It is not unusual to see States mortgaging their funds even during peace, and in order to save themselves, employing means which they call extraordinary, and which are so to such a degree that the most demented profligate would hardly imagine them."[2] Evidently our philosopher might still be read with profit in a century when the development of the system he condemns has turned the great European nations into armed camps, and threatens the most fearful cataclysm that humanity has yet experienced.

I cannot undertake to follow him into the more abstruse discussions, such as his theory of the influence of climate on the laws,

[1] Liv. xiii., c. 15. [2] Liv. xiii., c. 17.

and his economic views, which lengthen his work into many more books. I have discussed that part of it which exercised most influence on the political thought of his age. Let me only add that he was a staunch advocate of individual right, in contrast to Bossuet, and of inalienable personal liberty, in contrast to Grotius. The State, he insists, may not encroach on the right of property. The monarch is not the universal proprietor. He may not, in virtue of his self-assumed absolute power, take away the property of the subjects, and if it should happen that the public good demands the use of private property, equity equally demands that compensation be given. In other words, it is not permissible to apply the principles of political law to matters which depend on the principles of civil law. And while he attempts to explain the prevalence of slavery in warm countries by climatic influences, he is the earnest champion of personal liberty as a natural right. "As men are born equal, we must conclude that slavery is contrary to nature, although in certain countries it is founded on a natural reason, and it is necessary to distinguish these countries from those where natural reasons are against it."[1] He is, all the same, a decided adversary of slavery, and his irony is as telling as are his arguments. He was not the first to champion the rights of oppressed races which even the Church had long ceased to vindicate actively. Las Casas and Bodin had preceded him as the advocates of emancipation, but he may claim the merit of reviving the question, and initiating its pressing claim to the consideration of the eighteenth century, on grounds of reason and justice.

SOURCES OF THIS CHAPTER.—Œuvres de l'Abbé de St Pierre; Goumy, Étude sur la Vie et les Écrits de l'Abbé de Saint Pierre; D'Argenson, Pensées sur la Réformation de l'État, and Considerations sur le Gouvernement de la France; St Simon, Mémoires; D'Argenson, Journal et Mémoires; Barni, Idées Morales et Politiques; Œuvres de Montesquieu, edited by Laboulaye, 1875-79, and Œuvres Complètes de Montesquieu, Paris, 1862; Janet, Histoire de la Science Politique, ii.; Flint, Philosophy of History in France; Sorel, Montesquieu, in the series of Grands Écrivains.

## CHAPTER XXV.

### ROUSSEAU, PROPHET OF DEMOCRACY.

IT would be difficult to imagine a more complete contrast between two minds than that between the minds of Montesquieu and Rousseau. Montesquieu possesses the historic sense in the highest degree, and studies history (with certain reservations) systematically and scientifically. Rousseau had read little history, was in fact impatient of history, did not possess the historic and scientific mind. He is a logician, not a historian, a theorist, not a scientist. Montesquieu is retrospective, rather than introspective; Rousseau is introspective rather than retrospective, in spite of his tendency to dogmatise on origins. If nature had combined the two we should have had a perfect Montesquieu, or a perfect Rousseau. Being distinct, they complete each other, and the completion was, I think, necessary. Montesquieu is great in his own sphere; but his sphere was not sufficiently wide for the age in which he lived. It was not enough to unfold

laws, to explain human society as, according to Mon-
ssarily was and had been. From the scientific point
n admirable
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re than he professed and pur-
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ory and too little of man; may,
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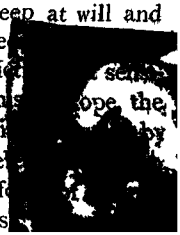
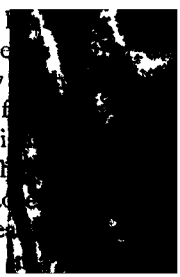
, and overlook the higher laws
ght.
the hands of a Montesquieu,
account of morality, of the right and the wrong of
mena. It was needful to emphasise this fact in view
history, and it was this that Rousseau attempted to
nce of the eighteenth century there was certainly
his mission. Laying down the "Esprit des Lois,"
he "Discourse on the Origin of Inequality" or the
" we feel under the spell of a very Ishmael of politics,
plifted against the whole social and political fabric

woven by the ages. To Rousseau history is largely a cycle of wrong and injustice. The present is intolerable because the past is a monument of unnatural convention. We shall see how he fulfilled his mission, what mistakes he committed, wherein his influence was salutary or detrimental. I shall not anticipate, but limit myself here to the remark that it was necessary and well that this side of the question should be emphasised, that long-suffering humanity should let its voice be heard in protest against its own history. It was this protest, delivered in language of great emotional power, that made the name of Rousseau memorable. Voltaire, indeed, protested in the name of reason against injustice and inhumanity. Rousseau protested in the name of the human heart, and he carried his protest into the sphere of politics, which Voltaire largely eschewed. He is the prophet of nature and the people. His watchwords are fraternity and equality, resting on natural rights and absolute popular sovereignty. It is the custom to depreciate Rousseau from the scientific point of view. It would be more just to recognise that Rousseau did what a Montesquieu could not do, and what he left undone. He misread history at times, because he was ignorant of it, but he undoubtedly grasped a great truth, even a scientific truth, and preached it with power, viz., that history is often not the revelation of law in the highest sense, but the perversion of it.

The contrast between the two men is as striking as that between their works. Montesquieu is the perfectly balanced nature, the profound thinker, the happy optimist who can go to sleep at will and awake with the delightful sensation of harmony betwe[illegible] the world. Rousseau is the ill-balanced mind, the vi[illegible] tive imagination, the pessimist, and ultimately the m[illegible] man of strong passions and weak will, unstable, morbi[illegible] vanity, and bordering at last on insanity. Neverthe[illegible] Rousseau was destined to be the greater practical f[illegible] fifty years, whether as political and social revolutionis[illegible] tual and religious reactionary.



The key to his character lies in the history of [illegible] Born at Geneva in 1712, he had the misfortune to lose [illegible] daughter of a Genevan minister, at birth. "I cost my [illegible] he says, in his "Confessions," "and my birth was the f[illegible] His father had a boyish love of romances, and in thi[illegible] of the imagination father and son moved until th[illegible] their stock led them to such histories as were a[illegible] others, "Plutarch's Lives," which became Rousse[illegible] In 1722 the father expatriated himself from Geneva [illegible]



at the loss of a lawsuit, and the son was sent, at the age of ten, to school at Bossey. At school he first came into touch with the reality of this rough world. He became, too, the victim of a secret indulgence, which tended more and more to poison his peace of soul. The sensitive boy, who dreamed of ancient heroes, and felt drawn to solitude, was not more at his ease first as notary's clerk and then as engraver's apprentice at Geneva, than he had been on the school bench. He was miserable, and in a paroxysm of terror at the consequences of staying out late one night, he turned away from the barred city gate and fled into Savoy (1728). He found shelter in the parsonage of the Catholic curé of Confignon, who sent him to Annecy with letters of recommendation to a Madame de Warens, a zealous propagandist of the faith. Madame in turn despatched him to a monastery at Turin, in order to be converted. Converted he was, of course, for the fugitive lad, with nothing in his pocket and no settled religious principles in his head, proved a very tractable novice. The ceremony of his reception brought him a sum of twenty francs—the offertory on the occasion—and with this sum he was set adrift again on a world whose temptations know no difference between Catholic and Protestant. For a short time our dreamer nurtured his ambitious flights on these twenty francs, and then came the question of subsistence. He was forced by want to give up his scheme of conquering a princess at the court of the King of Sardinia, and take service as a footman with a Madame de Vercellis and afterwards with the Count of Gouvon. He performed the duties of this latter post so ill that he was turned adrift once more to wander back over the mountains to Annecy, and seek a dubious asylum in the house of Madame de Warens (1729). So far Rousseau is the picture of instability, and this tendency to oscillate stuck to him all his life. His sensibility was too strong for his will, and in the dangerous environment of a woman of low morality, his sensibility was not braced by the invigorating air of a manly independence, by perseverance in the pursuit of an aim, by persistent consecration to an ideal. His life was that of a hanger-on, paying for subsistence by the surrender of virtue, and varied by vagabondage in the occasional striving to find a vocation, as musician or as secretary, at Lausanne, Neufchatel, Paris. The best part of his education was the time spent on the road amid the common people, whose sufferings he learned to know, and amid the solitudes of nature which he observed with the eye of an artist. Nature and the people taught Rousseau all that he ever learned with profit. His attempts to study books—Locke, Malebranche, Descartes, Leibnitz—were, on his own confession, failures.

The fact of the French peasant professing poverty in order to deceive the rapacious taxgatherer furnished him with a mission as the leader of a revolt against an oppressive convention. "Herein lay the germ of the inextinguishable hatred which afterwards grew up in my heart against the vexations that harass the common people and against all their oppressors."

The intrusion of a rival in the affections of Madame Warens at length delivered him from the demoralising bondage of sensuality under the spell of this woman, and set him on the road to the fulfilment of his vocation (1741). He went to Paris with a new system of notation which the Academy rejected, hovered on the outskirts of Parisian society, and through the influence of a *grande dame*, was appointed secretary to the French ambassador to Venice. This appointment would have been the beginning of a career to most men. To Rousseau the eighteen months of diplomatic secretaryship were but a curious episode. He disagreed with his chief,—and for once the fault seems to have been on the other side,—and returned to Paris towards the end of 1744 to solicit justice in vain, and to fall hopelessly in love with the kitchenmaid of the hostelry where he alighted. Theresa Levasseur had no grace of person or manner, yet the budding man of genius found in this woman, who was so stupid that she could never learn to read or write, a singular satisfaction of soul and sense, which lasted the greater part of a lifetime. With unaccountable persistence, Rousseau thus put into practice his theory of seeking nature unblemished by art. He was false to nature in one grave particular, however. The children born of this connection, five in number, were despatched to the foundling hospital, and the amours of the couple were robbed, by the poverty of the lover and by his blunted sense of parental responsibility, of what might have been their redeeming feature. It is difficult to recognise in this unnatural paterfamilias the man who was about to melt the frivolous society of the age by his burning periods into tenderness and philanthropy. In Rousseau the ideal by no means accords with the real, and this is true alike of his conduct and his teaching. He never learned to apply the rules of practical reason to his actions, as he never learned to look the facts of history squarely in the face. He had hitherto led a vagabond, self-indulgent life; he possessed more sensitiveness than will; and thus we have in this complication the manifestation of an ill-regulated nature—half poet, half philosopher—in a lax age.

There was great danger lest the rest of his life should bear the stamp of misdirected, spasmodic effort, resulting in failure, beggary, and perhaps suicide. He tried music once more, but gained little

for his compositions. He obtained a secretaryship which brought him 900 francs a year; he copied music; and secretary and copyist he might have remained to the last had not his eye caught the advertisement in a newspaper of the subject of a prize essay by the Academy of Dijon. The question proposed for discussion riveted him to the spot. "Has the restoration of the sciences contributed to purify or to corrupt manners?" Rousseau was walking on the road from Paris to Vincennes on a hot afternoon in 1749 to visit Diderot, then expiating in this State dungeon the authorship of the "Letter on the Blind." It was another case of Paul arrested on the road to Damascus. The meditations of years on the social misery, the misgovernment of the age, took shape in a paroxysm of intellectual excitement. To Rousseau this excitement was an inspiration, in the sense that inspirations came to sensitive natures of old with a turn for meditation or contemplation. He sank down under a tree with swelling head and rapt vision. He looked into a new world—the world of primitive times. "Could I have written the quarter of what I saw and felt under that tree, with what clearness should I have brought out all the contradictions of our social system; with what simplicity I should have demonstrated that man is good naturally, and that by institutions only is he made bad."[1]

In this ecstatic spirit Rousseau took up the question, and maintained the contention that science, literature, and art lead to the corruption of society, with such brilliancy of language and originality that he carried off the prize.[2] The piece has been regarded as a mere *jeu d'esprit*. It is not thus that Rousseau would have us take it. He really wished to be accepted as the prophet of antagonism to his age. "I am not anxious to please the *beaux esprits* or the people in vogue."[3] The arts and sciences, he insists, have contributed to enslave the nations. They have tended to stifle the sentiment of original liberty, and make them love their slavery. A vigorous mind is incompatible with modern refinement and pomposity, which contrast so strikingly with the simplicity and truth of a less refined state. Sincerity and real esteem do not exist in modern society; politeness and urbanity are so many veils of vice. History shows us the deterioration of man in proportion to his advance in civilisation. Witness Greece and Rome, and listen to Socrates, and learn from Sparta. The philosophers who undermine faith and religion are especially obnoxious to the new prophet, in

[1] Letter to M. de Malherbe, quoted by Morley, Rousseau, i. 134.

[2] The Discourse is in Œuvres, i. 1-20.

[3] *Ibid.*, i. 1.

whom the note of reaction, swelling from the heart, not from tradition, is already audible. Equally obnoxious is the artificial system of modern education, which lends a certain mental agility, but does not nurture the moral sentiment or develop the judgment. Military courage, morals are dwarfed in the modern atmosphere. And so on. The discourse is at best a spirited philippic against the moral degeneration of the age, and is easily accounted for by the reaction of a mind which holds its artificial modishness in abhorrence. It reveals a lively appreciation of sincerity and virtue, and a corresponding warmth of language. "The question is not now whether a man possesses probity, but whether he possesses talents; not whether a book is useful, but whether it is well written. The rewards are prodigious for the clever man, but virtue is left unrewarded."[1] "Almighty God," is his prayer, "restore us ignorance, innocence, and poverty, the only blessings which are fitted to render us happy, and which are precious in Thy sight." The protest is timely, yet the writer's history and philosophy are at fault. In denouncing the effects, he mistakes the cause. He neither reasons nor reads history aright. The cultivation of the mind, the progress of knowledge, is not an evil, but a real good. Human nature may be base, has often been vile under the guise of a high refinement, but the evil lies in human nature, not in the cultivation of science and art. Virtue is not incompatible with knowledge, with civilisation. In advocating a pessimistic view of history and civilisation, Rousseau entirely ignores the other side, and has no sense of the enormous services rendered to humanity by science and art. To cry in the midst of a frivolous and artificial age, Verity, verity, is good. It is not good to decry civilisation if it happens to be associated with their opposites, or to lay so much stress on military virtues and mere militarism.

The offer of another prize by the same academy in 1753 on the questions, What is the origin of the inequality among men, and is it authorised by natural law? was the occasion of a second attack on convention of far more serious import (1753).[2] The subject was not new. Since the Reformation theories on the primitive condition of man had been rife enough. But while his predecessors had theorised, Rousseau appeared with a gospel which should transform society—a gospel clothed in language fitted to arrest both mind and imagination. His treatment of the subject was new and singularly effective. His method, unlike that of Montesquieu, is speculative, not historic, but his philosophy glows with the passion of a flaming heart, and enthrals the reader almost in spite of himself. Primitive man, according to our

[1] Œuvres, i. 16. [2] *Ibid.*, i. 71-157.

philosopher,[1] though leading a purely animal life among wild beasts, was superior to them in two particulars—in the consciousness of free-will and in the capacity for perfectibility. Man is originally free and capable of perfection. A wise law of Providence ordained that his faculties only developed themselves by exercise. His condition was not, therefore, relatively miserable. He was actuated by sentiment rather than reason, especially the sentiment of pity, which tended to the conservation of the species. He was not aggressive, his natural impulse being to guarantee himself from the ills to which he was subject, rather than to inflict injury on others. The uniformity of life in a primitive state tended to make the degree of difference between individuals less, and to ensure more equality than in a civilised society, in which variety of character and condition tends powerfully to induce inequality. But would not the strong oppress the weak? No. The unlimited freedom of savage life would secure the weak, since it would cost the would-be aggressor more trouble to oppress his fellow savage than supply his own wants. The precautions necessary to guard against escape, to secure himself against murder, would entail such vigilance, such exertion, that oppression would be a burden.

Society originated in an act of egoism and usurpation. "The man who first enclosed a piece of ground and bethought himself to call it his, and found people simple enough to believe him, was the true founder of civil society. How many crimes, wars, murders, miseries, horrors would not he have spared the human race who, destroying the meadows or filling up the ditch, would have cried to his fellows, 'Take good care not to listen to this impostor; you are lost if you forget that the fruits of the soil are for all, and that the land belongs to no one.'"[2] This idea of property, bringing in its train the inequality and strife of a civilised state, was the initial bane of the human race. It was developed only gradually, and the happy state of innocence between the state of brutal savagery and that of civil society was the "veritable youth of the world." All progress beyond this period, while tending to the perfection of the individual, tended to the degeneration of the species. In this state man strikes the medium between the indolence, the obtuseness of the primitive state and the petulant activity of our *amour propre*. In this state he was free, healthy, good, happy, and independent. But the moment that one man felt the need of the assistance of another, property,

[1] Discours sur l'Inegalité parmi les Hommes, Œuvres, i. 71-157. It was dedicated to the Republic of Geneva, 12th June 1754.

[2] Œuvres, i. 105.

inequality, slavery were the result. Metallurgy and agriculture were the two arts whose invention produced this great revolution. Iron and corn have civilised man, and undone the human race. The culture of the soil necessarily produced its division and the first rules of justice. Each one claimed a right to the fruit of his labour. The strong man who could work got more than the weaker, the skilful man more than the less skilful. Inequality was thus gradually increased by superiority of strength and skill. Personal ambition, conflict of interest, competition, rivalry thus come into play as the concomitants of property and inequality. The oppression of the poor by the rich was the next inevitable step, and slavery became the mark of poverty, brigandage the remedy of the poor, and avarice, ambition, and iniquity desolated society. Man had reached a state of conflict in which force prevailed, not justice and pity. Even the man who possessed a large amount of property was not sure of his possession. Force might take away what had been obtained by force, and those who had gained their property by their labour could not be sure of retaining it. "It is I who have built this wall, I have won this piece of land by my labour." "Who has given you the boundaries," the multitude may ask, "and in virtue of what right do you pretend to pay yourself at our expense for a labour which we have not imposed on you? Are you ignorant that a multitude of your brothers perish or suffer want because you have too much, and that an express and unanimous consent of the human race is necessary to your appropriation of any part of the common subsistence, to which you can have no claim?" In order to escape the force of this reasoning and preserve his property from the ravages of the multitude, the owner invented the specious pretext of a general agreement for the protection of his property. "Instead of turning our forces against each other, let us unite under a supreme power which shall govern us in accordance with wise laws, which shall protect and defend all the members of this association, repel the common enemy, and maintain eternal concord."[1] The multitude, easily seduced, allowed itself to sacrifice liberty for a security which really signified the protection of the rich and the slavery of the poor. Such was the origin of society and laws, which produced new chains for the poor and new forces for the rich, destroyed for ever natural liberty, and fixed the law of property and inequality, made of an *adroit usurpation* an irrevocable right, and for the profit of the ambitious doomed the human race to labour, servitude, and misery.

The formation of one such society necessitated the formation of

[1] Œuvres, i. 114, 115.

others, since union for mutual protection was the only mode of successful defence. In this way national unions arose, national wars, and the horrible custom of regarding as a virtue the honour of shedding human blood. These wars occasioned more bloodshed in a single day than had been the case during whole centuries in the state of nature.

The constitution of this society was the product of gradual growth, as new wants and new ills betrayed themselves. The force of law was weak at first, and the difficulty of enforcing its observance led to the institution of magistrates. That the servants of the law existed before the institution of law he regards as impossible. The confederation was established before its chiefs were selected. The idea of men putting themselves under an absolute master, and choosing slavery as the only means of securing the common safety is equally irrational. The people selected their chiefs, not that they might enslave them, but that they might defend their liberty. The barbarian values liberty as the greatest prize, and does not tamely resign himself to its loss as does the civilised man. We must not judge of uncivilised man with the prejudices of civilisation. Savage man is in this respect like the wild animal—he bears restraint impatiently, and his instinct is to break the bars of his cage.

Government is not derived from the exercise of parental authority, which is something very different from political despotism. The paternal is a very slender and mild form of authority, and it ceases the moment the child becomes conscious of the independence based on the exercise of his own faculties, *i.e.*, when he feels himself able to provide for his own wants. The institution of tyranny could not thus be a voluntary act, and a contract that posits the advantage only on one side is no contract at all. Even if such had taken place, it could not be binding on posterity, because it was equivalent to the disposal of that of which our ancestors had no right to dispose. A man may dispose of his property, not (in spite of Grotius) of his life or of his liberty, which are the gifts of nature, not of fortuitous circumstances. Such alienation of self is an outrage alike on reason and nature. The jurists who pronounce that the child of a slave is born a slave, pronounce that man is not born man. *Government, therefore, has not its origin in an arbitrary power.* This is the leading thought of all these reasonings. Nevertheless, does not experience show that the law of force is everywhere operative both in nature and history, and that human reason is often unable to check its operation? But, objects Rousseau, even if the law of force prevailed, this law, being illegitimate in its nature, could not serve as the basis of the laws of society, nor, consequently, of its institutions.

The origin of the body politic is by contract, a contract between the people and the chiefs whom it chose, and binding both parties to observe the laws which stipulate and form the conditions of union. The people clothes the magistrate with authority to execute the laws, but not to change them. The magistrate, on his part, obliges himself to use his power only in accordance with the intentions of the people, to maintain each individual in the peaceful enjoyment of his property, and to prefer at all times the public utility to his own interest. The law or constitution, not the magistrate, constituted the essence of the State, and the contravention of the constitution gave each a right to return to his natural liberty. To obviate the anarchy in which this right might easily result, the need of a superior power expressed itself in the ascription of divine right to the sovereign authority. Religion thus rendered a great service to the race by checking social disorder. The various forms of government owe their origin to the peculiarities of the society at the institution of its government. An eminent man would naturally be elected as sole magistrate by his society, and make the State monarchic. Where there were several eminent men, the State would become aristocratic. Where wealth and influence were more equally divided, it would be democratic. The first governments were, however, everywhere elective, but as intrigue and disorder increased, the ambitious men manipulated the elections so as to make authority hereditary in their families, and people consented to enslave themselves for the sake of tranquillity. The rights of these superiors gradually increased until the people came to be regarded as their property.

There are thus three stages in the growth of inequality—the institution of property, of magistrates, of arbitrary or absolute power.

Political distinctions were followed by civil distinctions—distinctions not only between the people and its superiors, but between individuals among the people itself. The magistrate could not usurp the rights of the people without calling into play the self-interest of others, who became his instruments for their own advantage—in other words, shared in his usurpation. The effects of this usurpation on the history of the world have been tragic enough. Rousseau discovers their ubiquitous trace in the world around him, and denounces them with unstinted fervour. Modern society is a hideous tyranny which crushes human right under the millstone of selfish convention, with its exactions, its standing armies, its usurpation of popular rights, its false code of honour. Oppression, inequality are rampant, and the life of nature has become so distorted that the reclamations of the people against oppression are

treated as seditious murmurs. The seeming unity of modern society conceals in reality the division, distrust, and mutual hatred arising from conflicting rights and interests, and tending to strengthen the power that keeps all in subjection. The result is despotism. The peoples have neither chiefs nor laws, but only tyrants, and manifest the blind obedience of slavery. Force alone prevails, and revolution is justified by the simple fact that the tyrant can plead no right but that of violence, and may justly be dethroned by violence. Force preserves him, and force may displace him. "Society," he concludes, "presents to the eyes of the sage nothing but an assemblage of artificial men and of factitious passions, which are the fruits of all these new relations, and have no true foundation in nature. . . . It is manifestly against the law of nature, whatever definition we may give of that law, that an infant command an old man, that a fool lead a sage, and that a handful of people revel in superfluities, while the hungry multitude lack the necessaries of life." [1]

The "Discourse" lends itself so easily to criticism that criticism is almost superfluous. Though closely reasoned, it is to a great extent a work of imagination. The delineation of the primitive State is not the fruit of a comparative study of civilisation, and it is, in many particulars, contradicted by the modern sciences of anthropology and ethnology. It is, indeed, often enough self-contradictory, while the denunciation of property and other facts of historic society is one-sided and extreme. To regard all history as a gigantic usurpation is not to offer a sane or adequate interpretation of history. Rousseau makes light of history, and is in this respect the complete contrary of Montesquieu. He is a theorist, who sketches a picture of man and society, according to reason, but not according to reality. He is supremely unconscious of any desire on the part of the reader for facts to substantiate his theory. The importance of his "Discourse" lies, however, not in what it asserts, but in the impression it conveys. This is a noteworthy fact, at all events. It is permeated by a passionate note of antagonism to the age, and of sympathy with the oppressed, and it is potently fitted to nurture dissatisfaction with the condition of modern society in a people which is the victim of scandalous misgovernment. Society is not the mirror of original nature, though the "Discourse" may not be its true scientific interpretation. That is the important fact, which a suffering people will not fail to take to heart.

The "Discourse" failed to gain the prize, though it is a far more considerable production than its successful predecessor. Probably

[1] Œuvres, i. 125, 126.

the Dijon Academicians were too nervous to crown such bold speculations with their approval a second time, and, strange to say, it created less stir than its predecessor. Eight years intervened between the publication of the first part of the Rousseau gospel and the second, the "Contrat Social." Strange years, indeed, in which our gospeller is seen in a variety of *rôles*, as farmer-general's cashier, stoic, impassioned lover, cynic, romancist of the woods. Disgusted with the frivolity, the scepticism, the materialism of the salons and the supper parties of Paris, he felt more and more out of his element and longed for the mountains of Savoy, longed for the severe morality of Geneva, whose restraint and whose religion he had once abjured. He lifted up his voice against the levity that disputed the existence of God amid the giddy haunts of clever men and brilliant women. "Every woman of Paris society," he says in his "Letter to D'Alembert," "assembles in her apartment a seraglio of men more womanish than she, who render to beauty all sorts of homage except that of the heart, of which she is worthy."[1] With more sincerity than consistency, he expressed his dissatisfaction with the moral condition of the social life of his time—with its low view of domestic life, its superficial bonds of love and marriage, its want of sincerity and depth. He saw flattery instead of love in the conduct of men, who regarded woman merely as an agent of sensual gratification.[2] He exemplified his written protests against his age by laying aside the garb of the gentleman for a more modest, if eccentric attire. He turned his back on fortune, when the offer of an office in the fiscal administration might have brought him to riches. For riches he has nothing but the utmost contempt. He will not write for bread. His office as writer is a sacred one. He is the priest of his own high imagination. He resolved at length to turn his back on Paris itself, after a visit to Geneva in 1754, and his determination to retire thither was only diverted by the offer of Madame D'Epinay, one of his admirers, of a retreat in a cottage which she had built for him on the border of the Forest of Montmorency. In this Hermitage he spent eighteen months (April 1756 to December 1757) of bliss, mingled and rounded with misery. For the misery he was himself to blame. At the Hermitage he would be a sage; he showed himself a fool. In spite of his stoicism his passion broke loose in a wild attachment to Madame D'Houdetot, sister-in-law of Madame D'Epinay, and mistress of St Lambert. This passion he immortalised in the "Nouvelle Heloise," which, completed in 1759 and published in 1761, took Paris, especially the female part of it, by storm. The

[1] Œuvres, i. 246. [2] *Ibid.*, i. 248.

episode which gave birth to this novel unhinged his mind so far as to embroil him with his friends, with Diderot, Grimm, D'Alembert, Madame D'Epinay, and inveigled him into that labyrinth of suspicion which betrayed a disordered imagination, no longer under the control of common-sense. From the Hermitage he removed to Montmorency in the despairing mood of one who had alienated his friends and annihilated his own peace of mind. In this spirit of alienation from society he finished "La Nouvelle Heloise," wrote the famous letter to D'Alembert against the theatre, wrote, too, the most powerful of his works, the "Contrat Social," and "Emile."

"Man," says Rousseau, following Locke, to whom and to Montesquieu he is a debtor, "is born free, and everywhere he is in chains."[1] This epoch-making work thus bears the revolutionary impress on its forefront. Revolutionary the treatise undoubtedly is, though it should not be forgotten that Rousseau is merely elaborating certain political principles, and did not contemplate their application to contemporary politics. Revolution is permissible, because convention, not nature, lies at the root of society, and because force, which holds the vast fabric of society together, is not equivalent to right. "So long as a people is forced to obey and obeys, it does well; as soon as it is capable of throwing off the yoke, and throws it off, it does better. . . . The order of society is not the offspring of nature; it is founded on convention. . . . The strongest is never strong enough to be always master if he does not transform force into right and obedience into a duty." But to do so is unwarranted. How can that be duty which is not a voluntary act, but merely one of necessity, or at best of prudence? Where there is no duty, there is no right. Obedience produced by force ceases with force.[2] Since, then, no man possesses a natural authority over another, and since force does not produce right, convention alone is the basis of all legitimate authority among men.

It is absurd of Grotius to insist that, as an individual may alienate his freedom to a master, a people may alienate their freedom to a king. An individual may do so for money, or subsistence, but a king does not provide the people with subsistence. He derives his from it. "You say that (in return for this alienation) the despot secures his subjects civil tranquillity. Very well. But what does it profit them (glancing here evidently at the contemporary state of monarchic France) if the wars which his ambition brings upon them, if his insatiable avidity, if the vexations of his government desolate

[1] Du Contrat Social, ou Principes du Droit Politique, Œuvres, tom. iii. 306.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 306-309.

them more than their own divisions could do? What do they gain if this tranquillity is merely one of their miseries? One lives in tranquillity in a prison, but is this tranquillity a proof of well-being? The Greeks shut up in the cave of the Cyclops lived in tranquillity whilst awaiting their turn to be devoured?"[1] The people who sells itself to this sort of slavery commits an act of folly. To renounce your liberty is to renounce your quality of man, he reiterates in opposition to Grotius, and with it the rights, yea, the duties of humanity. Such renunciation is incompatible with human nature, man being by nature a free agent, and no generation has the right to barter that of its successor. Even success in war confers no right to enslave the individual, because war is a contest between States, not between citizens.

The social contract is the basis of the State. It results from the necessity of association for the purpose of realising the ends which the individual, in the course of the development of the race, cannot realise singly, but, as is shown above, it does not involve the alienation of natural rights. The problem was "to find a form of association which should defend and protect, with all the force of the community, the person and property of each associate, and in virtue of which, each, being united to all, nevertheless only obeys himself, and remains as free as before." A somewhat paradoxical enterprise. It is difficult to see how a man, who has agreed to yield obedience to an association, can be as free as he was before. Rousseau, nevertheless, believes that he can make him out to be so in his theoretic fashion, and proceeds to demonstrate his paradox by logic, if not from history or experience. He defines the contract to be the total alienation of each associate with all his rights to the whole community. Yet the individual is absolutely free, because each, having made a complete surrender of himself, the condition of association is equal for all. This equality precludes the oppression of any. There is no room for despotism in a community which claims and exercises equal rights. "Each one surrendering himself to all, does not surrender himself to any one." True, but he does none the less surrender himself, and even on paper, he is not so free as he was when he needed not to concern himself with his neighbours. If our philosopher would have eschewed theorising for a moment, and looked into history, he would have discovered that the tyranny of the many may be one of the most terrible of tyrannies. He would also have discovered grounds for accusing himself of inconsistency in contesting Grotius' doctrine of political slavery, and yet

[1] Œuvres, iii. 309.

admitting the right of the individual to alienate his freedom to the State, *i.e.*, to a political tyranny. Our philosopher is superior to history, however, and pays no heed to experience in the evolution of his theory.

This association, he proceeds, forms a moral and collective body, known as the people. The people is both sovereign and subject. It is composed of citizens, in the sense of participating in the sovereign power; of subjects, as being under the laws of the State. The act of association thus involves reciprocal obligation—the obligation of the sovereign body towards the individual, and the obligation of the individual towards the sovereign body. Obligation being mutual, there can be no conflict between the two. The subjects are bound by the sovereign, but as they compose the sovereign, no act of public deliberation can be otherwise than an act of the collective sovereignty. The contract is, in fact, a contract with oneself, not, as in the "Discourse," a contract between individuals and a king, and every law is obligatory only in the sense of being self-imposed. You cannot, then, infringe the rights of the members without infringing those of the body, and conversely. Duty and interest oblige both to mutual support. So let it be on paper. We are not dealing with reality, otherwise we might hint the interrogative whether the people is so free from party spirit, from conflicting passions as to submit unmurmuringly to a set of logical rules under the motto of the sovereignty of the people. Rousseau at least hears no discordant note in the logical symphony of his sovereign State. He is supremely optimistic. "The sovereign has not, and cannot have any interest contrary to the individual." Consequently there is no need of particular guarantees towards the individual. It is impossible that a body can act against its own interest. The individual must be content with the general formula of Rousseau's logic, but meanwhile mark the pregnant conclusion, significative of the dogmatism of the coming Reign of Terror. "The sovereign, in virtue of his being sovereign, is always what he ought to be." The individual may, as individual, have a will contrary to the general will. His particular interest may be hostile to the general interest. But to allow him the exercise of his will would constitute an injustice to the body politic, and he may rightly be constrained to obedience to the collective will. The only remedy for dissent or disobedience is force. "Whoever refuses to obey the general will shall be constrained by the whole body, which signifies simply that the body shall force him to be free."[1] Fateful word, which will by-and-

[1] Œuvres, iii. 315.

by fall with terrible significance from the lips of a Robespierre. "On le forcera d'être libre." We shall force him to be free, was the remedy of the ultra-democrats of the future for conscientious objections. Rousseau does not dream of this application, however, and goes on to predict incalculable blessings from the operation of his theory, though, in doing so, he contradicts the contention of the "Discourse" that the institution of civil society was a retrogression of the human race. The transference from the state of nature to that of civil society is now, on the contrary, a step in the right direction. The principle of instinct gives place to the principle of justice. The idea of duty displaces mere physical impulse. And though deprived of certain advantages connected with a state of nature, man regains them tenfold in the development of his faculties, the ennobling of his feelings, in civil liberty, in property—liberty no longer based on individual force, but limited by the will of the community, property guaranteed by a positive title, not merely the right of the first occupant.

If the State may constrain the individual, it may likewise dispose of his property, since he holds it only in virtue of his being a member of the State. "In regard to its members the State is master of all their property, in virtue of the social contract which, in the State, serves as the basis of all rights."[1] "The right which each individual has over his own property is always subordinate to the right which the community has over all."[2] On the other hand, "every man has by nature a right to all that is necessary (for his maintenance)." Both propositions may, of course, easily lead to spoliation, and did in coming revolutionary days tend this way. If the State may put its hand into my pocket, may I not put my hand into its pocket? Our philosopher did not intend to convey this meaning, though his revolutionary followers of the *sans culotte* type might not hesitate to draw their own conclusions. He did not advocate national or individual spoliation. "The positive act which renders him proprietor of any property, excludes him from the rest." But what of those who possess nothing? Rousseau does not, apparently, consider the contingency, but it will be awkward if his propositions should come to be applied to a state of things, not derived from logic, but from the hard facts of the political, social, and economic development of France.

The general will is the only ruling power in the State, and its object is the common good. The sovereignty, inherent in, and exercised by the general will, cannot be alienated to any person or body dis-

[1] Œuvres, iii. 316. [2] *Ibid.*, iii. 317.

tinct from, or independent of it. It cannot even be represented. "The sovereignty can never be alienated, and the sovereign, being a collective being, can only be represented by itself." Nor is it divisible. The division of the executive and the legislative power is erroneous, and incompatible with the social contract.

"The general will in the exercise of its sovereignty is always right, and always tends to the public utility."[1] True, the deliberations of the people may not always lay claim to the same amount of rectitude, for the people may be deceived, though not corrupted. There is a difference between the will of all and the general will. The former may be the agent of individual interests, and prevails when the people is divided into factions; the latter is the sentiment of the common interest. The danger to be guarded against is lest the general will may be overruled by, or subordinated to such factions.

The sovereignty inherent in the general will and derived from the social contract is absolute—as absolute as that of the body over its members—and the citizens are bound to render to the State the services which the sovereign demands of them. Nevertheless, this sovereignty has its limits. It is limited by the common interest. It cannot impose any burden which is useless to the community, nay, it cannot even wish to do so, since its object is the common good. The obligations which bind us to the body politic are binding only because they are mutual. In fulfilling them we act for our own interest as well as the common interest. In this sense the general will must always be right, because it embraces the interest of each. The general will, to be truly so, must be so in its object as well as its essence. It loses its natural rectitude as soon as it concerns itself with a particular object. That which generalises the will is not the number of votes, but the common interest which unites them. Each necessarily submits to the conditions which he imposes on others, and thus attains an admirable accord of interest and justice. "The social compact thus establishes among the citizens such an equality that they all bind themselves by the same conditions and ought to enjoy the same rights."[2] Our philosopher does not admit the perpetration of wrong by his sovereign. "Every act of sovereignty, that is, every authentic act of the general will, obliges or favours equally all the citizens."[3] The sovereign knows no distinction of person or class. What, he asks, is properly speaking an act of sovereignty? A convention, not of superior with inferior, but of the body with its members. To ask how far the respective rights of sovereign and citizen extend is, therefore, to ask to what point

[1] Œuvres, iii. 320. [2] *Ibid.*, iii. 322. [3] *Ibid.*

*the citizens may limit themselves? The sovereign power, absolute, sacred, inviolable as it is, cannot thus go beyond the limits of these general conventions. Every individual remains master of the property, the liberty left him by these conventions. In reality the individual, he assures us, does not alienate anything by surrendering himself to the State, and his situation under the contract is preferable to that in a state of nature.* By renouncing natural independence, he obtains real security and liberty. Nevertheless, our theorist invests the sovereign with the power of life and death over the individual. But how, you ask, can the individual, who himself does not possess the power of disposing of his own life, confer the right on the sovereign? Because, answers Rousseau, the exercise of this right may be expedient for the State. "If it is expedient for the State that you die, you must die." Even the individual is sometimes called on to risk his life in order to conserve it. Consequently, the conservation of society being the object of the social pact, that conservation involves certain risks. He who wishes to conserve his life at the expense of others must be ready to lose it in their behalf, and the citizen is not the judge of the peril to which the law may demand that he expose himself. "It is only on this condition that you have lived in security hitherto, and your life is not merely a benefit of nature, but a conditional gift of the State."[1]

In much of this reasoning there is an impression of unreality which rather perplexes the reader who desires to stand on sure ground. The sovereignty is beautifully logical, but it does not sufficiently take account of human nature, and one cannot escape the feeling that it would be advisable not to put a good deal of it to the test of practice. The emphasis laid on the sovereignty of the general will and on its object is good. In every properly constituted State the sovereignty must always lie in the general will, and the general will ought always to be exercised for the common good. But how to secure its workable expression if it cannot be represented; how to assure its efficient exercise if it cannot be partly transferred to and embodied by the executive; how to ensure an unvarying consensus of view even on the common interest in deference to mere formulas, without reference to the grand factor of compromise in the work of governing men; how to make this unwieldy "collective person" act smoothly without reference to the passions which no logic will keep under restraint; how in theory to confer absolute power on the sovereign and yet prevent the sovereign from abusing it in practice; how to rule a State for the general interest, and yet not

[1] Œuvres, iii. 323, 324.

concern oneself with particular or corporate interests; how to safeguard the right of the individual to property while declaring that individual right is subordinate to the right of the community; how, finally, to confer the right of life and death on the sovereign in virtue of expediency, and yet prevent the destruction of the individual, should the sovereignty in practice degenerate into a despotic tyranny,—this is beyond the power of human ingenuity to devise, and Rousseau's logic has not solved these problems. He merely spins a web of unreality, and makes experience shake its head. But then he is a sage sitting in his arm-chair, not a practical statesman. Unfortunately, posterity in the near future was to mistake him for a practical statesman, with not always happy results, in regard either to legislation or government. It only needs a Robespierre to give a practical turn to some of these fine logical periods, to toss France into the abyss.

Having formed the State, our philosopher proceeds to treat of legislation. A law is for Rousseau an enactment by the general will for the general interest. Under the social contract the individual is non-existent. It is the whole acting for the whole. "Every function which has reference to an individual object, does not belong to the legislative power."[1] Rousseau's legislation thus deals with the general, or abstract, not with the particular, or concrete. It is almost superfluous to ask him by way of objection, how, in practice, legislation can be useful or adequate if it does not concern itself with individual as well as general interests. He is only thinking of the general law of the constitution, "how to endow the body politic with movement and will by legislation." He has no idea of a constitution that may evolve itself by experience out of the wants and necessities of many centuries and various interests. That would be to come down to the realm of reality, and we must remember that we are still in the realm of logic. In soaring after Rousseau we have an uncomfortable feeling that we are skimming in the air high above the clouds, and may at any moment fall to the ground.

In accordance with this definition of law the only legitimate form of constitution is republican, *i.e.*, a government guided by the general will, whether expressed in a monarchic, aristocratic, or democratic form. How, then, are laws to be made? How can the mass, ignorant and blind, fulfil its legislative function? The people always wishes the good, but it does not always see it. "The general will is always just, but the judgment which guides it is not always enlightened. It is necessary to show it the right way which it seeks after, to guar-

[1] Œuvres, iii. 326.

antee it from the seductions of the individual will." The legislator is the great man that accomplishes this service, a Lycurgus, for instance. But the laws can have no authority unless approved by the free suffrage of the people. In order to secure adhesion to his dictates the great legislator invests them with the sanction of Heaven.

The State ought to be neither too small nor too large. If it is too large, the social bond is weakened; the way is paved for oppression; reform is made more difficult. If it is too small, it becomes weak, and its preservation is endangered. Before all, it ought to have a healthy and strong constitution,[1] and we should lay more stress on the vigour of a good government than on the resources of a large territory. A sensible remark, for once, and not unimportant in view of the fact that every politician in France will erelong have a constitution in his pocket. Unfortunately many of these nascent constitution makers will only follow their master too closely in mixing up good government with merely logical government.

The aim of every legislative system ought to be the greatest good of all, and this consists in liberty and equality. By equality he does not mean that the degrees of power and riches be absolutely the same for each, but that power be entirely removed from all violence, and never be exercised in contravention of the laws, and that no citizen be so opulent as to be able to buy another, nor so poor as to be constrained to sell himself. This involves on the part of the rich moderation in property and credit, on the part of the poor moderation of avarice and covetousness. This equality, you say, is a speculative chimera, which cannot exist in practice (here our theorist seems to contemplate practice), but if the abuse is inevitable, does it follow that it is not necessary to regulate it? It is precisely because the force of things tends always to destroy equality that the force of legislation ought to tend always to maintain it.[2] Evidently dissatisfied with the prevailing state of things which he would fain see changed towards simplicity. But this change will be difficult. "The work of legislation is rendered difficult, not so much by what must be established as by what must be destroyed, and that which makes success so rare is the impossibility of finding the simplicity of nature conjoined with the necessities of society." But the fact that a thing is, is not sufficient to justify its continuance. "A nation is always at liberty to change its laws." The laws of a nation should, however, always coincide with its natural relations, *i.e.*, its climate, soil, geography, etc.

Proceeding, next, to treat of government, he emphasises the distinc-

[1] Œuvres, iii. 332. [2] *Ibid.*, iii. 334, 335.

tion between the government and the sovereignty, or legislative power. The difference is important. It is the cardinal doctrine of the theory. The sovereignty, the legislative function, is inherent in the people; the government may be conferred by the people on its ministers, but the government is not sovereign. What, then, is the government? "An intermediate body established between the subjects and the sovereign for their mutual correspondence, charged with the execution of the laws and the maintenance of civil and political liberty." This body constitutes the executive, and its members are called magistrates. In its collective capacity it bears the name of The Prince, but its members are merely the commissioners of the people, and exercise their functions simply in its name. The people may limit, modify, and resume power when it pleases. The power of the government is merely the public power concentrated in it; as soon as it attempts to act absolutely, or independently, the bond of cohesion of the whole begins to relax.[1] The control of the government by the sovereign, *i.e.*, the legislature, ought to be abundant, and more so in a larger than in a smaller State, because there is a greater temptation and more frequent opportunity to abuse power in the former than in the latter. On the other hand, the powers of the government ought to be more ample in a larger than in a smaller State, because government is more difficult. Though the powers of the government are borrowed from and subordinate to the sovereign, *i.e.*, the people, this fact does not hinder it from acting with more or less vigour, but it must always be ready to sacrifice itself to the people and not the people to itself.[2] The government of a single individual is, he holds, following Montesquieu, always the most active, because the individual will represents a more intense degree of energy than the general, and acts more directly. The government is weak in proportion as the number of its members is large, and the larger the State, the smaller ought the government to be. The stronger the individual element in the government, however, the less likely is it to represent the general will, and the art of the legislator consists in fixing the point at which the energy of the individual and the general will may best combine for the interest of the State.

In regard to the form of government, Rousseau is not a republican of the narrow type. Although democratic in principle, he will not split hairs about forms, so long as the nation really governs. He betrays, in fact, a singular oscillation between theory and practice in

[1] Œuvres, iii. 339.

[2] *Ibid.*, iii. 340. Rousseau in developing his thesis indulges in a style of geometrical reasoning which is rather far-fetched.

this respect. "People have at all times much disputed as to the best form of government without considering that each is best in certain cases, and the worst in others."[1] He thinks, with Montesquieu, that democracy is suitable for small States, aristocracy for mediately small, monarchy for great empires. Literally his democratic government is government by the whole, but, again copying Montesquieu, he holds that it is not advisable, even if it were possible, that those who make, should also execute the laws. This would give occasion to the influence of particular views and the corruption of the legislature, which is worse than the abuse of power by an executive. Democracy is the most fruitful of civil war, intestine agitation, because it tends always to change its form. If there was a people of gods they would govern themselves democratically. It does not suit itself to man.

With Plato he prefers government by the wisest, that is, by an elective aristocracy, in the sense of the best and the wisest citizens. "The best and the most natural rule is that the wisest men govern the multitude, when one can be sure that they will govern for its advantage and not for their own."[2] Probity, intelligence, experience, not mere riches, as Aristotle has it, should constitute the reason of their choice. On the other hand, government by a hereditary aristocracy is the worst of all governments.

The "Contrat Social" is, in fact, not an attack on historic forms of government, though it is a democratic theory. The form of government is of secondary importance so long as the sovereignty of the people operates. Rousseau has no liking for monarchy, however, because the monarch is naturally inclined to sacrifice the good of the people to his own aggrandisement. The interest of kings is, he conceives, incompatible with the interest of peoples, and, while it is hardly fair to judge of monarchy in general from the examples of bad kings, it can hardly be gainsaid that the experience of France under the old *régime* largely tends to confirm his conclusion. The following, for instance, might pass for an apt criticism of the government of a large number of these French kings, however much they might have professed the contrary. "Their personal interest is primarily that the people be feeble, miserable, and that it should never be able to resist. . . . Princes always give preference to the maxim which is most immediately useful to them."[3] Exclude Louis IX., Charles V., Louis XII., and Henry IV., and this might be the maxim of government in France for five hundred years. It is difficult for a single man to govern a State well, and good government is impossible when he does so by substitutes. This, of course, would depend on the character of

[1] Œuvres, iii. 242. [2] *Ibid.*, iii. 345. [3] *Ibid.*, iii. 347.

these substitutes. With a Sully or a Colbert acting for the king, Rousseau's maxim cannot hold, but he might have appealed to French history to bear out his contention that, while in a republic the best men are raised to the highest places, scope is afforded under a monarch to corrupt court intriguers who occupy responsible places by favour. Corruption, it is true, may be traced in republics as well as monarchies, but there is a good deal to be said for his contention, that the people is less apt to be deceived in this respect than the monarch. Hereditary monarchy was instituted to avoid the disturbances and the evils of an interregnum, and everything tends to deprive of justice and reason a man educated to command others. He should be taught first how to obey. What remedy is there for the misgovernment of kings? Obey without murmur, says Bossuet and the rest of our advocates of absolute monarchy; bad kings are the punishment of Heaven. Rousseau, who evidently has in view the wretched situation of contemporary France, hints another solution of the question "What should we say of a physician who promises miracles, and whose whole art consists in exhorting the sick man to be patient? We know well that when we have a bad government, it must be endured; the question is to discover a good one."

A simple government is in itself better than a mixed one, like that of Great Britain, but it is necessary to take measures to provide against inconveniences. If it is too strong, it is necessary to divide in order to weaken it; if too lax, to establish tribunals in order to concentrate it. While governments may be different in different countries (the difference depending on climate, soil, etc.), the infallible sign of a good government is the multiplication and prosperity of the people. It is the tendency of government, however, to act in opposition to the general will, *i.e.*, the sovereign.[1] Evidently mistrustful of the government, and in this respect he gives expression to the prevailing sentiment of his countrymen, a sentiment which went on increasing in volume and at last exploded with sweeping effects in the Revolution. The prince, *i.e.*, the government, tends naturally to oppress the sovereign. This is the inherent and inevitable vice of the body politic, which tends to destroy it as age and death destroy the human body. The State is dissolved when the prince or government ceases to administer the State in accordance with the laws, and when it usurps the sovereign power. The social contract is broken, and force alone commands obedience. Anarchy is the result whatever form the government assumes, democracy becoming ochlocracy, aristocracy oligarchy, monarchy tyranny. No human association

[1] Œuvres, iii. 33!

escapes this fate, but to preserve it as long as possible, it ought to receive the best constitution possible.

How is the sovereignty maintained? By the people, and for this purpose the people must be frequently assembled. "The moment the people is legitimately assembled as a sovereign body, all jurisdiction of the government ceases. The executive power is suspended, and the person of the least citizen is as sacred and inviolable as that of the first magistrate, because where the represented are assembled there is no representative."[1] As the sovereignty cannot be represented, the deputies of the people are not, and cannot be its representatives. They are only its commissioners, and cannot conclude anything definitely. Every law which the people in person has not ratified is null, and is no law. The English nation thinks it is free, but it is greatly mistaken, for it is so only during the election of members of Parliament; as soon as the Parliament is elected, the people are slaves and count for nothing. This is a bold assertion, but it was not very far from the truth in Rousseau's day, when electoral rights were very limited and election was the reward of corruption and patronage to so large an extent. The idea of representation sprang from feudalism, which, in contrast to Montesquieu, he denounces as absurd and iniquitous. The Romans never had representatives, they had tribunes, but the tribunes never dreamed of usurping the functions of the people. The people may be represented by the executive, which is only force applied to law, the mere embodiment of the popular will; it cannot be by the legislature, which is the embodiment of the sovereignty, and this sovereignty is, in virtue of the contract, in the whole people. In modern nations, however, the executive has usurped the sovereignty, which is inherent in the legislature, that is, the people. They have no slaves, but they are slaves. The executive is master, instead of being merely the officers of the people, which, according to the "Social Contract," may constitute, or deprive them of their power whenever it pleases. Whenever the people institutes a hereditary government, whether monarchic or aristocratic, it does not take upon itself an engagement. It is merely a provisional form which it gives to the administration until it pleases it to ordain otherwise. But such changes are always dangerous, and it is not advisable to change the established government unless it becomes incompatible with the public good. This circumspection is, however, only a political maxim, not a rule of right. In regard to such changes all the formalities requisite to distinguish a regular and legitimate act from a seditious tumult, the will of the whole people

[1] Œuvres, iii. 360.

from the clamours of a faction, must be carefully observed. Otherwise the government may usurp the popular authority, and under the pretext of exercising its rights, it may easily extend them and hinder the convocation of assemblies designed to re-establish order. It may assume in its own favour the opinion of those whom fear keeps silent, and punish those who dare to speak. It is by this easy method that all the governments in the world, when once invested with the public force, usurp, sooner or later, the sovereign authority. The claims of utility have apparently no weight with Rousseau. Everything that encroaches on the original sovereignty, though it may be historically expedient, is for our author usurpation. And assuredly there was not much in the character of the government of France under Louis XV. to render the usurpation justifiable. As far as Rousseau's theory is a reaction from the abuses of contemporary government, it is at least explicable, though it is very questionable whether in practice it is workable. This usurpation he would prevent by periodical assemblies, and he would posit two questions at the commencement of their deliberations: "First, Whether it pleases the sovereign to maintain the present form of government? Second, Whether it pleases the people to leave the administration to those at present intrusted with it?" Such assemblies may even revoke the social compact. The individual may even renounce the State by expatriating himself, but he may not do so in order to shirk his duty to the State. Such a step would be criminal desertion. Let the *émigrés* of the future Revolution mark and digest this pregnant sentence.

The sovereignty of the people in this extreme form is subject to grave objections in practice, as the Revolution was to show. In a small State, such as Rousseau contemplated, in which the whole people may meet and discuss affairs, it may be practicable. In a large one, it is impossible to legislate or govern efficiently except by representative institutions and unless a certain amount of independence be allowed to both the legislative and the executive powers. The members of the legislature, insists Rousseau, are commissioners, not deputies of the people, and the people is assumed to be in a position to discuss projects of law in their local assemblies with such thoroughness and unanimity that their commissioners are simply to vote them. The practical men will reply that the people, as a rule, is not fitted to do so. It may give a general mandate, it must leave particulars to be hammered into shape by parliamentary debate. Laws do not spring unanimously into being by the sort of plebiscite advocated by Rousseau. They

must be deliberated by a responsible representative assembly, and this assembly, to be truly deliberative, must have a certain amount of initiative, of independence. Montesquieu had already pointed out that assemblies, or diets for the purpose of merely registering mandates, are the most unwieldy and impractical of bodies. Rousseau might with advantage have taken a hint from Montesquieu in this particular, as he did in so many other particulars. He disdains to distil the constitutional wisdom of history, and his revolutionary followers will persist in regarding him as wiser than history, with disastrous results to France in the near future. One fatal result will be to make legislation subject to mob pressure. The mob, in its capacity of sovereign, will invade the legislature and force the members to pass measures agreeable to it, but detrimental to the State. The sovereign mob will thus infringe freedom of judgment, hamper adequacy of discussion, prevent compromise and moderation, which are indispensable to the making of good laws by a popular assembly. Legislation will neither be free, nor wise. Even granting this independence to the legislature, the legislator is still, under a system of popular election, subject to the control of the electors. If they are not satisfied with the laws, they can dismiss their representatives in a constitutional manner, and substitute others who will abrogate them in accordance with their will. Rousseau's assertion that the people of England had no power because they elected representatives is thus inapt. If he had said that the English people merely imagined themselves free because only a small proportion possessed the franchise, his criticism would have had, at that time, considerable point.

Another baneful effect of the dogma of the sovereignty of the people in this extreme form is to render the executive weak. The executive is, according to Rousseau, practically without a will of its own. Experience goes to show, however, that the executive, like the legislature, must be allowed a certain amount of initiative, of independence. It must be clothed with all the authority of its functions if government is to be efficient, and law and order respected. To make its head a mere puppet of the legislature, whether it act wisely or unwisely, and the ministers mere clerks, is to endanger order, just as to confer unlimited power on either is to endanger freedom. The theory thus tends not only to depreciate unduly the legislature and render legislation practically difficult; but to weaken the executive and render good government equally difficult.

Rousseau's ideal State is a number of peasants wisely discussing affairs under an oak tree, while he has nothing but contempt for the refinements of "those nations which render themselves illustrious and

miserable with so much art and mystery."[1] Such a people has need of but few laws, and when the necessity of new ones arises, it makes itself universally felt, and neither intrigue nor eloquence is necessary to pass them. When the social bond relaxes, and the State (in the sense of Rousseau) grows feeble, and personal interest intervenes, the common interest is lost sight of, opposition arises, unanimity fails, the general will is no longer the will of all. Debate and contradiction ensue, and the best measure is disputed. A further stage is reached when the State only exists under an illusory form, and the vilest interest passes under the name of public good. The question is not then, Is such and such a measure advantageous to the State? but, Is it advantageous to such and such a man or party?[2]

Rousseau is a great admirer of Roman institutions, though his knowledge of them is rather faulty, and he recommends the tribunate in order to the conservation of the laws and the legislative power, though the office should not be permanent for fear of usurpation. In cases of danger it is even advisable to institute a dictator for a certain term for the benefit of the public security, and here again we seem to see the shadow of the coming revolutionary *régime*.

He advocates a State religion, but it shall not be the Roman Catholic religion. Roman Catholicism he pronounces hostile to the social contract, destructive of the unity of the State, and while recognising the good elements of the Christianity of the Gospel—its humanity, its sublimity—he reprobates the idea of a celestial kingdom, which tends to detach the heart of the citizen from the State. Christianity preaches only servitude and dependence; it is too favourable to tyranny. The subjects are not responsible for their religious opinions to the sovereign, except as they have a bearing on the community. It is important to the State that each citizen have a religion that causes him to love his duties, but the dogmas of this religion have an interest for the State only as far as they relate to morality, and the duties of the citizens towards one another. It pertains to the sovereign to establish a profession of faith purely civil, not as dogmas of religion, but as sentiments of sociability. Without this profession it is impossible to be a good citizen or a faithful subject. Without obliging every one to believe, the sovereign may banish whoever does not believe, as unsocial, if not as irreligious. If any one, after having publicly recognised these dogmas, conducts himself as if he did not believe them, let him be punished by death. He is guilty of the greatest of crimes; he has lied before the laws. He thus opens the way to religious persecution which his revolutionary followers

[1] Œuvres, iii. 366. [2] *Ibid.*, iii. 367-369.

were to tread with such sad results. Toleration is indeed a dogma of this civil religion, but it only extends towards tolerant creeds, and does not include the Roman Catholic creed. Whoever says, "Outside the Church there is no salvation," ought to be driven from the State. The dogmas of this civil religion should be simple and explicit. They should embrace the existence of a powerful, benevolent, and intelligent God, who rules man providentially, the future life, the happiness of the just, the punishment of the wicked, the sacredness of the social contract and the laws.

It is not too much to say that the "Contrat Social" became the political gospel of the age. Strange that a work, in which so much is sophistry, exerted such a vast influence. The explanation is that it appeared at the favourable moment, in an age of aspiration after ideals of political reform. In such an age the wonder would rather have been if it had failed of effect. It is plausible sophistry, inspired by conviction and tipped with dogma, that at such a time moves most powerfully. But all is not sophistry. There are many passages which betray a sympathetic spirit chafing against bad government, against the oppression of the poor, against systems unworthy of free men. It is like the Gospel in this respect —it is full of feeling as well as dogma. Nevertheless it cannot be called a very remarkable work if viewed on its own merits, and apart from the circumstances of the time. It is incomparably inferior as a treatise to the "Esprit des Lois." It shows much ingenuity, large sympathy, some wisdom, some knowledge, but little practical sagacity, and only the barest sense of the historic. Some of its principles are, moreover, dangerous to liberty as well as order, and Rousseau must bear whatever responsibility is involved in the failure to take into account the possible practical effects of some of his doctrines. It was not written with a revolutionary intention in the sense of aiming at the violent overthrow of existing governments, though it became the text book of the revolutionists. The oppression of the French peasant, apparent in bad cultivation and beggary, rouses his wrath, but he does not advocate revolution as a remedy, nor does he mean that modern States should in practice adopt his theory. It is the fashion to declaim against his dogma of the sovereignty as the incentive to the anarchy of the Revolution. His hostile critics forget that it was not the application of his dogma of the sovereignty of the people that produced the excesses of the Terror, but the usurpation of that sovereignty by a faction. Against such usurpation Rousseau sounds a warning note. He emphasises, too, the practice of virtue, the love of our fellow-men,

respect for property and social institutions, obedience to the laws, esteem for wise and good sovereigns, who try to assuage the ills arising from social abuses. One thing, however, he emphasises, and it is that a people must despise a constitution which, in effect, makes abuse its law.[1] In the dedication of the "Discourse on Inequality" to the Republic of Geneva,[2] he appears in a decidedly anti-revolutionary mood. Revolutions expose the people to the wiles of seducers, who only rivet their chains more closely. In spite of his sovereign people in the abstract, he speaks with disapproval of plebiscites like those of Rome, in which the chiefs of the State were debarred from taking part. No one should have the right of proposing new laws according to his phantasy. This right should belong to the magistrates, and the people should show caution in giving its sanction in the interest of stability. He deprecates popular interference with government, and gives much shrewd advice which his followers subsequently ignored. Yet he is no flatterer of kings. In the preface to the "Contrat Social" he holds Grotius up to contempt for making his court to Louis XIII., and charges him with the crime of despoiling the people of their rights, and transferring them to the king. Barbeyrec, the French translator of the "De Jure," who dedicated his translation to George I., incurs the same censure. If these men had told the truth they would have courted the people, but then the people have no embassies, no chairs, no pensions to offer. In contrast to Voltaire, who affected aristocracy and dearly loved a king, Rousseau has a warm sympathy for the poor man, and a high opinion of his innate rectitude and intelligence, and he has always a good word for patriotism of the heroic mould, as exemplified by the Corsicans, who asked him to sketch a constitution for them.

Though not himself a preacher of revolution, he has the presentiment of coming upheaval. "We are approaching a state of crisis, the century of revolution. Who can answer for what you will then become? What men have made, men can destroy. There are no ineffaceable characters except those which nature impresses, and nature does not make princes, rich men, or grand lords. . . . I hold it impossible that the great monarchies of Europe can last much longer. All have reached the period of brilliance, and all such States are on the point of decline."[3]

These remarks were addressed to "Émile," the imaginary pupil whom he trains from childhood to manhood in his treatise on education. As the "Contrat Social" helped materially to conjure political

[1] See note to Discourse on Inequality, p. 133.
[2] 12th June 1754.
[3] Émile, ou de l'Education, p. 166.

revolution, "Émile" gave an impulse to a remarkable social revolution. During the reign of Louis XV., domestic life in what was arrogantly denominated "Society," had well-nigh ceased to exist. Conjugal morality was practically unknown among the frivolous libertines of Versailles and the Parisian *salons*.[1] If a man had a wife for legal and social purposes, he had a mistress or mistresses for affairs of love. From the king downwards this was the proper thing, and while the wife was a fixture, the mistress was a changing quantity, as the memoirs of the time only too amply prove. Domesticity was of course unknown under such a social code. Children were a burden to the giddy, lustful women who spent their time in talking politics, economics, love, scandal with sensual, clever men. They were relegated to the nursery, which the mother seldom entered, or to the convent, whither she never went. They never knew maternal fondness, paternal solicitude. It was to such a society that "Émile" appealed with a touching eloquence that won many a convert to more rational and humane methods of education. It is a work of great originality. The language is perspicuous, the style, for a work of reasoning, animated and precise. His views, especially on the training of the child up to the age of twelve or fifteen, are startling, even to paradox, and strikingly reactionary from the pedantry, the superficialness, the orthodoxy of conventional education. According to his wont, he rebounds from this convention to the opposite extreme, and hazards confident assertions, in support of his system of nature, which fail to convince. He takes no account of experience in his vehement demand for education according to nature. His theory exacts a revolution, and he will not be content with a reform. Contentious matter apart, it is impossible not to admire the fine moral elevation which actuates the author, and which he seeks to inspire into his pupil. His theory contemplates nothing less than the full moral development of the child, and on this he sets the highest value. A child of nature, conscious of the harmony of the moral, the mental, and the physical, is his ideal. The ideal is good, the method by which he realises this ideal is strained, artificial.

The profession of faith of the Savoyard vicar, which he inculcates as the creed of Émile, is a noble statement of natural religion, clear and convincing, yet not presumptuous or dogmatic. It discards revelation and miracle, but it honours truth and morality. It rejects the fables, and exposes the presumptuous ignorance with which man has disfigured and belittled the Deity. But in rejecting theology it does not reject religion. His scepticism is the revolt

[1] Lettre à M. D'Alembert, Œuvres, i. 246.

of a deeply religious mind, a passionate lover of virtue, not of an atheist, a materialist. He does not deal in ridicule or in philippic. The rejection of revelation only clarifies the view, and elevates the soul to the contemplation of the God of nature and conscience, fills it with the sentiments of adoration and gratitude, of wonder and praise, inspired by the sublime spectacle of the universe and the moral aspiration of the soul. The vicar speaks, not the language of paradox, but the simple and sincere language of the heart, and while he denies, he also affirms, and proclaims in emotional terms the eternal verities of God, immortality, virtue, and duty.

The publication of the "Contrat Social" and "Émile" in 1762 marks the fatal period of Rousseau's peace of mind. The years spent at Montmorency had been fairly even in their tenor. The Maréchale de Luxembourg replaced Madame D'Epinay as patroness, and set apart a lodge in the park at Montmorency for his use, whither he might retreat from his cottage when he pleased. The Prince of Conti and Madame Boufflers were among his friends, and in the society of the marshal and his wife, he met many of the highest persons of the kingdom. The irritable sage succeeded tolerably in keeping himself in a sociable mood in spite of severe bodily pain. "I am not out of pain a single moment, day or night, and this quite drives me mad." Suicide was sometimes in his thoughts during these sleepless nights, and the mania of suspicion already began to take hold of him. In these conditions of physical misery and passable social environment, the "Social Contract" and "Émile" were produced. Their publication was the beginning of a long period of woe for their author, for Rousseau had not the slippery agility of Voltaire in warding off persecution. He put his name to his books, and had to take the consequences. The Parliament of Paris, which was hostile to philosopher and Jesuit alike, pounced upon "Émile," and, in its ignorance of the real religious tendency of the book, as a reaction against the scepticism of Voltaire and his disciples, decreed it to be burned, and its author arrested. Rousseau was persuaded by the Maréchale to forestall imprisonment by flight. In the middle of June 1762, he reached Yverdun in Berne, only to learn to his astonishment, that the government of Geneva had burned "Émile" and the "Social Contract," and decreed arrest against himself if he should set foot in Genevan territory. The government of Berne was preparing to take the same step, and there was nothing for it but to escape to the Prussian territory of Neufchatel. Its governor, Lord Marischal, gave him, with the approval of Frederick, whom Rousseau had not treated very deferen-

tially, a right kindly welcome. The solid Scot and the flighty Swiss became fast friends. At Motiers he remained for three years, safe from arrest, though assailed by the paper attacks of philosophers and orthodox alike. The strife over him at Geneva called forth the "Lettres de la Montagne," in which the injustice of the Genevan oligarchy is severely handled. He was involved more and more in controversy, and at length became the object of the popular dislike in his village retreat. The pastor, who had first befriended him and even admitted him to the communion, ended by calling him an atheist, and debarring him from the sacrament. His persecutors took him to be possessed of the evil one—who else would dress himself in Armenian garb, and go on lonely botanic roamings?—and threw stones at his cottage. This sort of persecution became unbearable; flight again, the only alternative (September 1765). He sought a refuge in the little island of St Peter, in the Lake of Bienne. St Peter was just the spot for such a fugitive, who craved isolation and peace. For several weeks he abandoned himself to the pleasant dream of ending his days in this idyll. He had forgotten to reckon with the Bernese aristocrats, however, and his dream was abruptly interrupted by an order to quit within a fortnight. Whither now? Holland, Normandy, Lorraine, Berlin, Vienna, London, Corsica, passed before his imagination as havens of refuge. He actually got as far as Strasburg on the way to Berlin. Then, yielding to the persuasion of the Prince of Conti and other friends, he decided for England and David Hume, and in January 1766, passed across the Straits of Dover in Hume's company to the land that has welcomed so many of the persecuted to its free shores. London was hugely interested in the author of "Émile," and gave him more attention than he cared for. Hume established him at Wootton in Derbyshire, and procured a pension for him. Rousseau rewarded this kindly assiduity with the most extraordinary conduct. He fell into his old habit of suspicion in an intensified form. He believed the hapless Hume to be guilty of all manner of rascalities which suggested themselves to a disordered brain; and in a moment of exasperation, Hume wrote a public vindication of himself. The vindication was unnecessary, the accusations only deserved pity, or at most contempt. They were those of a monomaniac, and the refutation only confirmed them. For sixteen months Rousseau lived in terror of his imaginations of a conspiracy against his happiness by Hume, the French philosophers, all England, all mankind. During lucid intervals he wrote his "Confessions," and at last betook himself, the victim of his morbid imaginings, out of the country back to France

(May 1767). He went to Fleury, at the invitation of Mirabeau, "Ami des Hommes," to Trye, a place of Conti's, where he remained a year and finished the "Confessions," and whence he again fled, haunted by conspiracy,—finally to Paris, where he spent the last eight years of his mournful existence. He lived partly by copying music, refusing the English pension and all other money offers, until he could work no more, when he accepted M. Girardin's invitation to take up his abode at Ermenonville, about twenty miles from Paris. There death came to his relief on the 2nd July 1778.

SOURCES OF THIS CHAPTER.—Œuvres de Jean Jacques Rousseau, more particularly the Confessions, supplemented by Morley's Rousseau; Discours sur Le Rétablissement des Sciences et des Arts, a-t-il contribué à épurer ou a corrompre les Mœurs; Discours sur l'Inégalité parmi les Hommes; Le Contrat Social; Émile, ou de l'Education; Lettre à M. D'Alembert; Lettres de la Montagne.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### The Encyclopedists and the Economists.

WITH Diderot the movement of free-thought which prepared the way for the Revolution, entered on another phase. Diderot and his fellow-workers of the Encyclopedia formed the organised army, which had for its aim the scientific generalisation of knowledge, and the reform of society, untrammelled by tradition. The fact of this organisation of intellectual force was one of great import. France had reached that dangerous stage when the national mind was becoming increasingly alert, and the government increasingly inert and impotent. The diffusion of knowledge in such a contingency meant, sooner or later, mischief to the government. Repressive edicts could no longer stem the surging tide of intellectual activity, and that tide will, it is to be feared, erelong submerge king and throne.

Though not one of the most striking figures on the stage of the eighteenth century, Diderot was undoubtedly one of its greatest geniuses. He was more profound and more original by far than Voltaire or Rousseau, though he lacked Voltaire's power of brilliant expression, and Rousseau's gift of passionate diction, and their vastly more popular names have eclipsed his. He was born at Langres in 1713, where his father was a cutler in easy circumstances. Like so many famous men of the century, he was educated by the Jesuits in the College D'Harcourt at Paris. His Jesuit teachers spent thankless years in the attempt to form the young Denis into a Jesuit father. Like Voltaire, he proved intractable. Like Voltaire, too, he proved a refractory son. He could not bring himself to love the profession of lawyer or physician, and his father consequently left him to make his way by his own resources. For ten years (1734-44) he led a life of miserable vicissitude in Paris. His buoyant nature, his indifference to things material carried him through many experiences that would have crushed an ordinary man. Once he was so hard pressed by poverty that he fainted from hunger. His mother's savings were several times conveyed to him by a servant, who in-

creased the sum by contributions from her own scanty earnings. Thus he managed to exist till fame, or at least notoriety, found him living by no means a well-regulated or promising life. He kept himself from starvation by teaching, by literary hack work, by writing, of all things, sermons at so much each. Worse still, at the age of thirty he must needs get married to a seamstress, with whom he fell mortally in love, though his earnings depended on nothing more steady than the composition of an occasional sermon. His married life was a sad mischance, and the fault, it is to be feared, was largely his. Of course he had his mistresses—the first of whom absorbed all the literary earnings which should have gone into the domestic purse—and, of course, husband and wife quarrelled, in spite of the license of the time, for Madame Diderot was pious and dutiful, and M. Diderot was neither.[1]

Diderot never wrote anything in the way of masterpiece. He was not intense, sustained enough for that. The Diderot of reality may not be seen in his writings. He was a dull writer, though he was the most brilliant conversationalist of his time. All contemporaries who knew him intimately agree in that. But he failed to convey the verve, the light persuasion of his tongue to his pen. The man was greater than his works. He began with a translation of Shaftesbury's "Enquiry concerning Virtue and Merit," and Shaftesbury remained his master in ethics. This translation was followed by an original composition, "The Philosophic Thoughts" (1746), an attack on revealed religion, which is still theistic in conception.[2] The "Letter on the Blind" (1749) introduces to us the blind Cambridge professor of mathematics, Sanderson, demolishing the argument for the existence of God, founded on the grandeur and order of the universe. It presages the modern scientific contention that man, and indeed, the universe, are the products of the laws of evolution, and that when we recede far enough back into the ages of chaos there is no God, but the fortuitous operation of things, perceptible. Sanderson, or rather Diderot, sees no trace of law or intelligence in this process, for the result might have turned out quite differently—might have ended in misadaptation as readily as in exquisite arrangement. This "might" is a slippery foundation for argument, and we may leave it in the vague region of curious possibility, and note here as the important matter, that Diderot was now

[1] See Morley, Diderot and the Encyclopedists, vol. i.; Carlyle's masterly article, "Diderot" in his Miscellanies; and the memoir on Diderot by his daughter in Mémoires, Correspondance, et Œuvres Inédits de Diderot.

[2] Morley, Diderot and the Encyclopedists, i. 58.

in a very materialistic, atheistic frame of mind. The censor evidently thought so too, for both letter and author fared ill at his hands. Diderot was thrown into Vincennes to ruminate on the fact that law and not chance had disagreeably proved to be in sufficiently active operation for his comfort. He spent three months in Vincennes, was kept in very close confinement during the first one, and had to exercise his ingenuity to manufacture ink out of grains of slate mixed with wine in a broken glass. A toothpick served as a pen, and the margin of "Paradise Lost," which he happened to have in his pocket at the moment of his arrest, as writing paper. Through the agency of Madame du Châtelet, to whom the governor was related, the last two months were spent in comparative freedom. He was allowed to walk in the park on parole, and to receive his friends, Jean Jacques among them. At the end of this period the bookseller who had taken in hand the Encyclopedia, of which Diderot was the presiding genius, secured his release. His versatile and comprehensive mind had been meditating since 1745 the plan of an encyclopedic classification and statement of knowledge, in accord with Francis Bacon's system. It was Bacon, as Diderot often enough confesses, to whom he and his coadjutors owed the idea of the work, which was to be no mere compilation, but a reasoned system of knowledge. The bookseller, Le Breton, who at first entertained the idea of publishing a translation of Chambers' two-volume Encyclopedia, deserves the merit of helping to put the larger plan of Diderot into practical operation. He associated himself with several other booksellers for the purpose of launching the scheme, and happily the Chancellor D'Aguesseau had literary and scientific interest enough to give the undertaking his blessing (1746).

Diderot was fortunate in finding so powerful a colleague in the work of editorship as D'Alembert. D'Alembert was both an illegitimate and a foundling child, the offspring of the amours of Madame de Tencin and an artillery officer. The mother abandoned the poor infant on the steps of the Church of St John the Round, where he was found by the beadle in a perishing condition. The beadle gave him his name, and a poor woman acted the part of mother towards him so well that for forty years he lived under her humble roof. He was a pupil of the Jansenists, who could vaunt his genius and attainments as a set-off to the more numerous breed of distinguished pupils of Jesuit masters. D'Alembert became a famous mathematician, and it was his proficiency in mathematics and natural science that suggested his co-operation as editor of the Encyclopedia to Diderot, whose knowledge of physical science was not profound or comprehensive enough

to enable him to discharge that part of the editorial functions with satisfaction. In D'Alembert he found a colleague whose enthusiasm equalled his own, who could write better (for he practised the art with assiduity), whose devotion to science had led him to resist the offer by Frederick of the Presidency of the Berlin Academy, and of the far more munificent offer of the post of preceptor to the Czarewitch, and who was at one with his colleague in the crusade against obscurantism on behalf of positive knowledge and freedom. For it must be remembered that in such hands the Encyclopedia became not merely a series of scientific treatises; it had a moral and social aim as well. It was designed to be the powerful engine of many-sided reform, to help in sapping the foundations of superstition, to present positive knowledge apart from theological dogma, and indirectly, if not directly, to work for the emancipation of the mind from the errors of the past. It may be questioned whether this was to set to work in a truly scientific spirit. Truth, rather than party, ought to be the sole aim of men who attempt to generalise knowledge.

Of course the editors and the contributors had to walk warily in view of a censorship which might at any moment be exercised as the agent of bigotry. They had to appear as orthodox as possible, while leaving their readers to divine their thoughts. "Time," wrote D'Alembert, "will enable people to distinguish what we have thought from what we have said." These are regrettable reservations on the part of men whose object was the statement of scientific truth. The narrow conditions of the age partly excuse them. They had to choose between compromise of this kind and complete suppression. Even with all their circumspection, the work did not escape the lynx eye of bigotry. It was only brought to a close after much vexatious persecution, and after having to stand the test of the reaction headed by Rousseau. Jesuit and Jansenist united in the opposition to the undertaking, and a decree of the Council forbade the printers to continue to print the first two volumes, issued in 1751-52, and the booksellers to sell them (1752). The work was not stopped, however, and the publication of the next five volumes was allowed to go on. The appearance of Helvetius' book, "De l'Esprit," in 1758, aroused anew the alarm of the orthodox, and the scare reacted unfavourably on the Encyclopedia. The Parliament took up the hue-and-cry, and in 1759 the Council suppressed the privilege conceded in 1746, and not only prohibited the seven volumes issued, but stopped further publication. D'Alembert gave up the enterprise in disgust, but Diderot still held on, and in spite of another prohibition, laboured at the herculean task of editing

and largely writing the remaining ten volumes. They appeared in 1765, but only after the publisher, Le Breton, had expurged in a dishonourable and underhand manner, all matter that was likely to endanger their favourable reception by the government. Diderot was beside himself with rage. His rage was unavailing. The rascally publisher had taken care to make the mutilation irretrievable by burning both manuscript and proof sheets, as received from the editor's hands.

Whatever may be said by orthodox critics against the theology and metaphysics of the Encyclopedia, there is a fine vein of humanity, not of the merely theorising sort, but of a practical, reforming type in many of its articles. It is this reforming spirit that made it a power in things political, that marked it out as a preparation for the Revolution. It exposes with as much boldness as it may the abuses of administration, and the evils of a worn-out economic system. It attacks unjust taxation, unjust restriction of labour, iniquitous game laws. It shows a heart responsive to the misery of the people. "The poor common people is incredibly stupid," we read in the article on Misery, "I know not what false dazzling prestige closes their eyes to their present wretchedness, and to the still deeper wretchedness that awaits the years of old age. Misery is the mother of great crimes. It is the sovereigns who make the miserable, and it is they who shall answer in this world and the other for the crimes that misery has committed." Diderot and his fellows have not grasped the idea of popular rights. The right of citizens is confined to the man of property, and modern democracy, in the sense of government by the people, is unknown. Diderot, like Voltaire, has no high notion of the people, and no writer of that time who knew intimately the state of ignorance and degradation in which the masses in France lived, very well could.

There is not much more, outside the Encyclopedia, to be said of Diderot except what is interesting merely as literary history. His journey to St Petersburg in 1773, his great reception by Catherine, his brilliant conversation, and his sojourn with Prince Galitzin, the Russian ambassador at the Hague, both going and coming, were among the red-letter days of his life. His pen continued active to the end, which came ten years later (1784); but for these and other productions which the world has forgotten, the reader must be referred to the twenty-two tomes of his writings edited by his disciple Maigeon.

Let us turn for a moment to several works by associates of the band of which Diderot was the leader, whose influence may be traced

in the moulding of the opinion of the age. The Abbé Condillac was one of the Encyclopedic brotherhood. Though he was not an aggressive battler against the Church whose uniform he wore, he nevertheless gave an impetus to the anti-Christian philosophy of the century.[1] He not only preached Locke's doctrine of sensation as the origin of all our knowledge, he went further, and while admitting the individuality and activity of the soul as the thinking principle, refused to admit the auxiliary of reflection as a source of knowledge. From the senses alone we derive all our conceptions. Even our moral ideas come from the same source. Morality is merely conformity to the laws—the laws, that is, as expressive of the dictates of nature. Condillac, however, predicates of the soul an independent substance; he believes in God and free-will.[2] Others of his Encyclopedic brethren drew a different conclusion. From sensation to materialism, pure and simple, the step is short. Helvetius took this step in his book "De L'Esprit" (1758). Man here appears as an animal who is differentiated from the lower animals by the superior fineness of his touch. The human hand, not the human intelligence as such, is the mark, nay, the cause, of man's superiority over the lower animals. Free-will is a fable. Our volitions are the necessary effects of our impressions. Man is merely a sensitive being, and pleasure, that is, self-interest, happiness, is the only principle of our actions. Virtue and vice are merely conventional terms, merely relative distinctions. The utility of an action is the only test of its character. Public utility is the supreme law. "A single principle, such as that of the utility of the public, that is to say, of the greatest number of men submitted to the same form of government, should underlie all legislation." Helvetius is the forerunner of Bentham, who owned his obligations to the author of "L'Esprit," at least for his great utilitarian principle, though his deductions from it were far more objective, adequate to the phenomena to be accounted for. As men, he adds, are the product of habit, it follows that education is everything. There is no innate inequality of intelligence; genius is the product of circumstance. In all this, as demonstrated by Helvetius, there is little philosophy and much paradox, but it exasperated Helvetius' generation in a high degree. "There is a man who tells the secret of everybody," said Madame de Boufflers. Even the trivial, sensual society of the age was not prepared to accept this dissection of its egoism as the true one. Virtue found plenty of champions to

[1] Essai sur l'Origin des Connaissances Humaines (1746), and Traité des Sensations (1754).

[2] Traité du Libre Arbitre.

declaim in her honour. The Sorbonne and the archbishop raised their voices on behalf of the dignity of man; the government deprived the author of his charge in the household of the queen; the Parliament set about decreeing his arrest. Helvetius saved himself by retracting, and did not venture to encounter another such storm by publishing a second treatise, in which his doctrine was further elaborated.[1] It only appeared after his death.

And now appears one, more redoubtable by his dogmas than the slippery Helvetius. Baron Holbach and his "System of Nature" (1770) sent a shiver through society. The metaphysical disputation lands, in the pages of Holbach, in materialism and atheism pure and simple. Holbach was the genial patron of a group of philosophers who did not shrink from drawing their own extreme conclusions from the metaphysics in vogue. At his house they met to dine and discuss, without the slightest restraint for established or traditional opinion in philosophy, or in political science, the book which was to be the permanent literary expression of the ideas of this atheistic conclave, which disgusted Rousseau, and set the pens of Voltaire and Frederick in motion in defence of the existence of God and the institutions of society. It was as much because of its fierce attack on institutions as for its materialist philosophy that "The System of Nature" fell like a bomb on the age. It is, in fact, a trenchant condemnation of the injustice and oppression of government as mirrored in the misery of the people. In this respect it is far more direct and practical than Rousseau's syllogisms. It is, in fact, the out-and-out text book of revolution, both religious and political, and its disciples will have their part to play in the persons of Hebert, Clootz, and others when the time comes. It is a battery, not exactly of heavy artillery, directed in deadly fierceness on the abuses, and what its authors account the errors of the age. Let man make up his mind to accept nature as its own creator, and let him strive to ameliorate his lot as a physical being, for with the body all ends. Yet Holbach is not a cold negationist who takes no account of human misery. He is alert in noting that misery, and in calling on his age to regenerate itself by means of the philosophy of naturalism, and put an end to the insensate state of things which keeps the human race downtrodden. "By a sequence of human madness whole nations are forced to labour, to sweat, to water the earth with their tears, merely to keep up the luxury, the fancies, the corruption of a handful of insensates, a few useless creatures. So have religious and political errors changed the universe into a valley

[1] De l'Homme.

of tears." From dethroning kings the author passes on to dethrone the Supreme Power of theism as a phantasm of metaphysics, and the abortion of superstition. It is not merely the Church that he would crush as the handmaid of superstition, but religion itself as an enemy of reason, and the ally of political tyranny. No wonder that the apostle of Ferney cries halt, pen in hand, and Frederick's hair stands on end.

The Encyclopedists embraced in their ranks masters of every branch of knowledge, the economists among the rest. It would not be incorrect to regard Boisguilbert as the father of the science of political economy, though he was not the first to enunciate an economic theory, and disappeared into an obscurity, from which he was not to emerge for nearly a century and a half. He seems to have been the victim of a twofold conspiracy—a conspiracy of silence and a conspiracy of depreciation. Among his depreciators, Voltaire had nothing but disdain for the man who showed the future the way to sound economic principles. In spite of this double conspiracy, it is certain that his writings exercised a powerful influence on Dr Quesnay, the chief of the economists,[1] and on Mirabeau, senior, who enjoyed a consideration in the sect second only to that of Quesnay.[2] Both owed, in truth, many of their ideas to the obscure master, whom they indeed mention with honour, but whom their own fame only tended to place ever deeper in the shade of the unknown. Turgot, Dupont de Nemours, Mercier de la Rivière, Le Trosne, and other disciples of Quesnay do not seem to have had a suspicion of the teaching of the master at whose feet their venerated oracle had sat. Quesnay and his school were, all the same, consciously or unconsciously, the disciples of the system of Boisguilbert, though they may claim the additional credit of developing that system in a more scientific form. In the hands of Dr Quesnay and Adam Smith, political economy became a science. Like Boisguilbert, Quesnay was exercised by the question how to make both the State and the people prosperous. Frequent dearth and consequent misery, accentuated by war and maladministration, inspired the good doctor's theories, in which, like his predecessor, he had the implicit faith of an apostle. He had, too, unlike Boisguilbert, the apostolic gift of instilling the devotion of a band of disciples, among whom Turgot shone conspicuous, and Adam Smith may be reckoned. Turgot and Adam Smith learned to know and appreciate each other as co-disciples of the revered master.[3]

[1] See Cadet, Boisguilbert, 365-367

[2] *Ibid.*, 369-373.

[3] See Œuvres de Turgot, i. 69.

Quesnay, like Voltaire, was born in 1694, and was the son of a man of the law, an advocate who practised at Montfort l'Amaury. He was brought up on a farm, and was eleven years old before he learned, by his own persistent efforts, to read. His first reading book was, significantly enough, a volume on agriculture, the "Maison Rustique," which he mastered with the aid of a gardener of literary tastes like himself. His thirst for knowledge, increased by further reading, led him to study Latin and Greek, and eventually to devote himself to the science of medicine. He spent six years in practical and theoretical study of this science at Paris, and in 1718 he became a medical practitioner at Nantes. His skill in midwifery brought him into relations with the aristocratic families of the neighbourhood, and ultimately with Louis XV.'s queen. His reputation was such that La Peyronie selected him as secretary of his newly founded academy of surgery at Paris, and gained him in 1744 the office of first physician-in-ordinary to the king. His position brought him into intimate relations with Madame de Pompadour, but it is not as the courtier, for which *rôle* he was ill fitted, but as the philosopher, that his *entresol* at Versailles became the haunt of a band of ardent admirers and disciples, whose acquaintance we have already made *en passant*. He was a sympathetic, though not a militant, adherent of the free-thought movement of which Voltaire was the prophet, but his practical turn of mind fixed on the economic questions of the day. It was as the leader of the new economic school, known as the Physiocrats, that he exercised a decisive influence on the thought of his day. He wrote some of the economic articles in the Encyclopedia, and these articles were the forerunners of "The Tableau Economique" (1758), in which he expounded his economic theory.

For Quesnay, the soil and its culture are the grand sources of wealth. "The principle of all these advantages lies in agriculture, which furnishes the materials of the first necessity, which affords a revenue to the king, and incomes to the proprietors, tithes to the clergy, profits to the cultivators. It is this original wealth, always renewed, which sustains all the other classes of the kingdom, lends activity to all other professions, causes commerce to flourish, favours population, animates industry, maintains the prosperity of the nation." Hence the exaggerated emphasis laid on agriculture, as compared with industry and commerce, which he almost entirely ignores. It is the cultivator of the soil that multiplies wealth. Manufacturers, merchants, artisans, and others, only manipulate or consume the products of the earth, and add nothing to wealth. Production,

being the work of nature, is limited to one class (including the proprietors and the clergy, as well as the actual tillers of the soil), which assists nature. All the rest of the nation he relegates, with an amusing assurance of assumption, to the sterile classes. The falsity of the theory is of course apparent, and it was not difficult for Adam Smith and Turgot to vindicate the value of all work. It is self-evident that the labour expended on the manufacture of raw products, such as corn and wool, or on their circulation by commerce, is as really productive work as the rearing of sheep or the cultivation of a field of wheat. It contributes a value to the article manufactured or circulated, which it could not otherwise possess. The doctor's system is thus too narrow, and is consequently open to destructive criticism. At the same time he grasped many sound economic principles, if he unduly narrowed their scope. He combated the mercantile system with its fatuous doctrine, that it is essential to the prosperity of one nation to prevent, by all manner of factitious expedients, the prosperity of another. Such artificial interference with the natural laws of political economy is vicious, and defeats its own purpose. The solidarity of the human race is the true nurse of the prosperity of individual nations. To imagine that prosperity consists in the old notion of a favourable balance of trade in the commerce with other countries, in the sense of merely increasing and hoarding the mass of money accruing from that commerce, is totally erroneous. Wealth consists in production, which is fed by consumption, not by money, which is only the medium of exchange. Consequently liberty and competition, not restriction and prohibition, are the only means of prosperity. The policy of every wise government should be, in the words of Gournay, the policy of *laisser faire, laisser aller*. In other words, the government shall not interfere, by the imposition of arbitrary laws, with the necessary laws of economics. This is merely harking back to the old cry for liberty from government interference, which the system of Colbert had evoked in the days of Boisguilbert. Liberty of commerce in grain, in particular, is for Quesnay the grand secret of the law of nature. By opening the ports to free export, the government will secure for the cultivator fairer prices, and therefore greater production, and fairer prices will benefit the government and the whole people. Conversely, restriction or prohibition can only impoverish the cultivator by diminishing prices and hindering production, and thus weaken the State by keeping the people poor and miserable. Sully was, in the doctor's opinion, a far greater minister than Colbert. Not only did he grasp the fact that agriculture is the true source

of a nation's wealth, but he allowed free export, and thus ensured prosperity to the nation. A prosperous nation makes a strong government. Taxation ceases to be oppressive, for as taxation ought to be borne by the net revenue of the possessors and cultivators of the soil, a full revenue would infallibly result from free trade. By the operation of this principle the fiscal system would undergo a much needed reform, and the parasitic race of financiers and farmers-general might be obliterated forthwith. In all this Dr Quesnay does little more than repeat Boisguilbert, though he does so in a more scientific form, while at the same time vitiating his system by laying too much stress on the interests and the exclusive importance of one class.

There is one grand objection to the system, which (as the edict of 1664 shows) exercised no small influence on the government, but which was to prove impotent to avert the coming crash. In spite of specious phrases, it is essentially a class system, the system of the landed proprietor, and it might easily lead to unjust legislation in the interest of one part of the nation at the expense of the other. It would, according to its author, increase the incomes of the proprietors of the soil, and while developing the natural, at the expense of the factitious industries, diminish that of the manufacturer, merchant, artisan, which have been artificially augmented by the protective system. In other words, it would tend to privilege one class while depressing another, and this result cannot be the operation of the natural laws of political economy, which must benefit the interests of all. It would, moreover, tend to confirm the absolute power of the Crown. The doctor has no conception of political liberty, while ardently championing the doctrine of liberty of trade, especially in corn. The increase of wealth being the chief concern of the government, the legislative and the executive power ought to be united in a strong sovereign, because this form of government is best fitted to give the protection and stability necessary for the development of wealth. The government is, however, bound to legislate for the advantage of the general interest, *i.e.*, of agriculture, and if education were universal, it could not fail to do so. Public opinion, as the champion of the general interest, would infallibly tend to make the sovereign both a wise and beneficent legislator. In this sense the sovereign is despotic, but if laws, injurious to the public interest are passed, neither magistrates nor people are bound to obey. This is the conception of the old *régime*, which ascribes all government to the king and excludes the people, and it is widely different from that of the reactionary political theorists. The doctor is, in fact, except in

his free-thinking proclivities, a man of convention, and therefore the opponent of Jean Jacques. The social state and the state of nature are not inimical. The former is a legitimate development of the latter. Property is not the contradiction, but the sequence of individual liberty. Yet while there is common-sense in the good doctor as opposed to Jean Jacques, not to speak of Mably and Morelly who carried Rousseau's teaching to the full length of communism he, too, is the slave of his theories. The tendency to theorise, to reduce political institutions to the standard of certain conclusions from certain premises is, in fact, observable in the economists as well as in the social and political reformers. They were, however actuated by a noble striving to improve the miserable lot of the peasant. From this point of view it was not without reason that Mirabeau, senior—that strange mixture of prejudice and common sense, who was thrown into Vincennes for the outspoken criticism of the government, contained in the "Theorie de l'Impot"—entitled his chief work, "L'Ami des Hommes." They attempted to forestall revolution by economic reform, and they were destined to prove unsuccessful, though they found in Turgot, in the following reign, a leader who directed all the energy of his administrative ability to the task of regenerating France.

Turgot, who was born at Paris in 1717, was educated for the Church, but his large and scientific mind was not fitted to constrain itself within an ecclesiastical career. He showed his early aptitude for dealing with economic and financial questions in a refutation of Law's system of unlimited credit. While yet a youth we find him grappling with the large questions of the philosophy of history with breadth and originality, combined with acuteness. In contrast to Rousseau, he grasped the idea of progress, and conceived the vast plan of illustrating it in a review of universal history. Liberty is the soul of progress, and Turgot championed it with a noble intermixture of passion and eloquence in the "Lettres sur la Tolerance" (1753-54). He vindicated the resistance of the people to an intolerant prince on the principle of justice. Even society has no right to be intolerant, as Jean Jacques proclaimed. Liberty may only be restrained when it degenerates into license, *i.e.*, into usurpation. "The principle that nothing may limit the rights of society over the individual except the greatest good of society appears to me false and dangerous. Governments are too apt to sacrifice the rights of individuals on the pretext of the rights of society. They forget that society exists for the individual, that it is only instituted to protect the rights of all by assuring the realisation of all mutual obligations." Inspired

by the persecution of the Huguenots, which raged with great virulence in the latter part of the reign of Louis XV., he argued in the "Conciliateur" that the prince is not the judge of transgressions against God, but only of those against society. He was at one with Voltaire in demanding the elimination of all ecclesiastical authority in civil affairs by the virtual separation of Church and State. He claimed the right on behalf of the State, in one of his numerous articles in the Encyclopedia, to dispose of the inherited rights of corporations, ecclesiastical or civil, in deference to the utility of society. He knew of no intermediate right between that of the individual and that of society. He thus gave expression to one of the great principles of the Revolution—the right to abolish, restrict, reform all hereditary or traditional rights which were judged incompatible with the good of the people. His bent lay, however, rather towards the field of action than towards literature. In 1761 he was appointed intendant of Limousin; yet he found time for the composition of a work, published in 1769, on the formation and distribution of riches, in which, while maintaining the physiocratic doctrine of Quesnay, he enunciated the principles developed by Adam Smith.

SOURCES OF THIS CHAPTER.—Œuvres of Diderot, D'Alembert, Condillac, Helvetius, Holbach, supplemented by Morley's Diderot and the Encyclopedists; Œuvres of Quesnay and Turgot, supplemented by Janet's Histoire de la Science Politique, ii., L. Say's volume on Turgot in the Grands Écrivains, and Cadet's Boisguilbert.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

THE SUPPRESSION OF THE JESUITS AND THE PARLIAMENTS—THE NEMESIS OF INTOLERANCE, AND THE FAILURE OF THE DEMAND FOR LEGAL GOVERNMENT (1760-1771).

THE religious and parliamentary strife lost its significance for the time being in the midst of an international struggle which cost France so dear in blood, prestige, territory, and treasure. The Parliament protested against oppressive fiscal edicts, and only registered them by royal command given in a *lit de justice*, but it did not carry its opposition further.[1] There was a great concourse of people on these occasions, notes Barbier, but nobody cried, "Vive le roi." There was an occasional bout of squabbling *pro* and *contra* over the Bull.[2] The Parliament still kept an alert eye on the Jesuits and the refractory clergy, and had the pleasure of seeing its arch-enemy, the Archbishop of Paris, banished once more for his unbending opposition to compromise.[3] Several of his clergy incurred the same fate for refusing the sacrament to their Jansenist parishioners.[4] Far more important was the victory over the Jesuits, a victory of historic significance as indicative of the strength of that spirit of revolt against ecclesiastical fanaticism and obscurantism, represented by the Jesuits, for which the century was already proving memorable. The Jesuits had wielded a potent ecclesiastical and political influence during the previous two centuries. They had indeed been banished once already from France, but they had a large following, in spite of the hostility of the Parliament, and their re-establishment by Henry IV. showed how firm a hold they had on the nation. They were now driven out with the approbation of the vast majority of the nation, and tradition and obscurantism, which had worked so much mischief to France, thereby received its rudest shock between the Reformation and the Revolution. This shock

[1] See, for instance, Barbier, iv. 327 and 405.
[2] *Ibid.*, iv. 252.
[3] *Ibid.*, iv. 251, 252 (January 1758).
[4] Vie Privée, iv. 42, 43; Siècle de Louis XV., 175.

was part of that sapping process which was to end in levelling the old *régime*, political as well as ecclesiastical, to the ground.

It is, however, a mistake to regard the crusade against the order as the outcome of a systematic conspiracy on the part of the free-thinking writers, or the free-thinking politicians of France and other countries. The initiation of the movement in France has been laid to the charge of Voltaire and Choiseul, has been denounced as the fruit of the association of a sceptical philosopher and a sceptical minister. The assertion is unfounded. There was no organised crusade, literary or political, directed exclusively against the society. The Jansenists hoped and worked for their destruction, and the sympathy of the philosophers was with the Jansenists in their opposition to the Jesuits. Both had done a good deal in their own way to educate public opinion against them. But the influence of the Jansenists was limited, and while that of the philosophers was growing, their combined efforts could never have scored such a triumph had not events contributed powerfully to this end.[1] The Jesuits had the misfortune for themselves to incur the hostility of the secular power in all Catholic countries, and their fall must be attributed mainly to this fact. It is none the less significant of the changed spirit of the age that one government after another could lay the axe at the root of an order which was the champion of the Pope and was accounted one of the main pillars of the Catholic Church.

The anti-Jesuit crusade on the part of the European governments did not originate in France. It took its rise in Portugal, where the first stroke was dealt by a man who had been educated by the Jesuits, and was even a member of one of their orders[2] (the third order). That man was Sebastian Carvalho, the famous Marquis de Pombal. Pombal was not actuated by the spirit of a sceptical reaction, though he had caught at Paris the reforming fever of the new philosophy. In his repression of the Jesuits he was, in fact, the ally of the Inquisition. Nor is there any ground for believing that he was the intrepid leader of a general European conspiracy against them, or that the Duke of Choiseul was his abettor and accomplice.[3] On the contrary the cruelty and injustice of his methods were severely reprobated by Voltaire.[4] Nevertheless his example gave an impulse to the hostility to the order which had been growing in France,[5] and a scandal, in which the order was involved, reanimated

[1] See St Priest, History of the Fall of the Jesuits in the Eighteenth Century (English translation), 2, 3.

[2] *Ibid.*, 14.

[3] *Ibid.*, 18, 19.

[4] Siècle de Louis XV., 177.

[5] St Priest, 21; Voltaire, 177.

that hostility, and gave the Parliament an opportunity for compassing its destruction, of which it was not slow to avail itself. Father La Valette, superior of the Jesuits in the Antilles, had turned his genius for commercial speculation so successfully to account that he had, much to the chagrin of the colonial merchants and planters, become the head of a vast trading establishment. As trader and banker, he did business with the great commercial houses of Marseilles, Paris, Lyons, Bordeaux, Leghorn, Amsterdam.[1] An idea of the extent of the worthy father's transactions may be computed from the fact that, on the outbreak of the war, he had drawn bills of exchange to the amount of one and a half millions, chiefly on the Marseilles firm of Lionci & Gouffre. Unfortunately for the firm, the vessels which carried the goods representing this value were seized by British privateers, and the Marseilles firm, after a fruitless appeal through Father Sacy, procurator-general of the Jesuits in France, to the general of the society to make good its loss, and enable it to meet its liabilities, became bankrupt. Father Sacy considerately offered to say mass on their behalf,[2] but in spite of masses the firm collapsed, and their collapse involved many other firms throughout the country. The liquidator of the bankrupt firm pursued Fathers La Valette and Sacy before the judges consuls at Marseilles, who condemned La Valette to pay the one and a half millions to the creditors of Lionci. The worthy father declared himself bankrupt, his liabilities amounting to three millions of livres. The judges thereupon held the order liable to pay Lionci's creditors. Instead of complying, the infatuated Jesuits turned for justice to the Parliament of Paris! (August 1760). They might have brought their case before the Grand Chamber, whose province it was to deal with such *quasi*-civil suits. They elected instead to plead before a tribunal traditionally hostile to their order. This appeal from Pontius to Pilatus was to cost them dear. They counted on the devotion of the Dauphin and the *dévots* to help them through, relied still more on their skill in casuistry and their intrigues to discredit Choiseul. The Duke de la Vauguyon entertained a grudge against Choiseul for his outspoken criticism of a paper on the administration, which he submitted as a candidate for a seat in the council. Choiseul told Madame de Pompadour that the paper showed neither common-sense nor a knowledge of geography. Vauguyon strove to avenge himself by working on the Dauphin's weakness for the Jesuits. He got a couple of Jesuit fathers, one of them a degraded priest, to compose a memoir in the name of M. D'Amécour, councillor of the Parliament, representing the hos-

[1] Vie Privée, iv. 44. [2] *Ibid.*, iv. 46, and see Barbier, iv. 381-383.

tility of the minister to the order and his intrigues for their destruction, and insinuating that the minister entertained something very like contempt for both king and Dauphin. This memoir was remitted to the king through the Dauphin, and Choiseul was not long in noticing its effect in the distant mien of his royal master. He remarked on it to Madame de Pompadour, and Madame showing signs of embarrassment, he extorted the fact that the cause of this strain lay in the obnoxious memoir. Choiseul went to the king and tendered his resignation on the ground of the royal want of confidence in not communicating to him the obnoxious calumny. Louis refused to accept, and gave him permission to interrogate M. D'Amécour in presence of the other ministers. D'Amécour disclaimed all complicity in the intrigue, and hinted that the Dauphin had striven in vain to secure his co-operation. The incident finished with a hot altercation between the Dauphin and the minister. "Perhaps, monsieur, I may be unhappy enough to be one day your subject," said Choiseul indignantly, "but I shall certainly never be your servant."[1] The intrigue failed, and Choiseul, who was not vindictive and was no partisan[2] in the ecclesiastical quarrels of the time, might have forgiven the insult. But Madame de Pompadour had not forgotten the austere refusal of Louis' Jesuit confessor to whitewash her relations with the king, and was only too eager to fan his resentment, and thereby gain him to the ranks of the enemies of the order. With mistress, minister, and Parliament leagued against them, the infatuation that invited inquiry and judgment before the Grand Chamber was suicidal.

The general met the contention that the society was bound to pay the debts contracted by its members, by the counter-contention that each house or college administered its own property, and was only amenable to the general in things spiritual. Moreover, the constitution of the society prohibited the members from engaging in commerce, and it could not, therefore, be answerable for their commercial defalcations. Show us, then, your constitution, in order to verify your contention, demanded the Grand Chamber.

Meanwhile the advocate-general, St Fargeau, in a memorable speech, maintained the solidarity of the order, which was, therefore, liable to make restitution to those who had suffered through the commercial operations of its agents. The Parliament took the same view, and condemned the society to make good the losses of the pursuers, and to pay 50,000 livres damages to the Lionci and all expenses.[3] The sentence was received with tremendous applause in a packed

[1] Besenval, i. 248-255.
[2] *Ibid.*, i. 244, 248, 249.
[3] Barbier. iv. 288: Voltaire. Histoire du Parlement, Œuvres, xv. 373.

court, varied by the hisses which greeted several of the Jesuit fathers who had the hardihood to be present. These jubilations were in fact universal. "The joy of the public," notes Barbier, "was excessive, nay, almost indecent—which proves its animosity against the society."[1] There still remained the question of its constitution, and the Parliament having got this document—the secret of two centuries—in its clutches, determined to make the most of its revelations. The obdurate fathers, who had walked into the lion's den, might well tremble for the consequences of this inrush of daylight into their mysterious organisation. Pope Clement accordingly hastened to interfere in an urgent missive to the king on their behalf. Louis promised to moderate the hostility of their enemies, and reserve to himself the last word on the constitution. Choiseul, at this stage, supported the policy of moderation, for fear of the political embarrassments accruing from a parliamentary triumph. Monarch and minister would probably have persisted in this evasive course had not the chancellor, Lamoignon, disobeyed the command to stop parliamentary proceedings, and merely written a letter advising the Parliament to refrain for the present from extreme measures. This advice was wasted on a body that had too many old scores to settle with the Jesuits to let its prey escape. Though it registered a royal declaration suspending proceedings for a year (6th August 1761),[2] it published a strongly worded decree against the society, condemning and consigning to the flames a large number of Jesuit books, published during the long interval between 1590 and 1757, as containing teaching pernicious to the State and the security of the subject, forbidding provisionally any Frenchman to enter the order or receive instruction in its seminaries, unless sanctioned by royal letters patent, and condemning in the most emphatic terms the despotic powers wielded by the general.[3] Renewed applause by the great majority of the public.[4] The king once more interfered with an injunction of suspension,[5] and meanwhile tried negotiations with Rome with a view to the reform of the order.[6] He asked the bishops[7] for suggestions as to these reforms, and submitted an edict, based on these suggestions, to the Parliament[8] (March 1762). The answer from Rome has become historic. "Sint ut sunt, aut non sint," said their general, Ricci—"Let them be as they are, or not be." Further manœuvres

[1] Barbier, iv. 389.
[2] Isambert, xxii. 311, 312; Barbier, iv. 406.
[3] Isambert, xxii. 312-320.
[4] Barbier, iv. 407.
[5] Isambert, xxii. 320-322; Barbier, iv. 408, 409.
[6] Despatch in St Priest, 4th January 1762.
[7] Barbier, iv. 414 *et seq.*
[8] *Ibid.*, iv. 426 *et seq.*

on the part of the Pope to frustrate reform were of no avail, and in thus manœuvring Clement and Ricci courted a worse fate. Louis had a leaning towards the Jesuits, who confessed him, but he had not the persistence to continue their defender against a hostility which was again reinforced by the mistress and the minister. Choiseul now supported the attacks of the Parliament, in which most of the provincial Parliaments had by this time joined. In the large provincial towns, as in the capital, the reports of those appointed to examine the constitution of the order were discussed with intense excitement and partisanship. The more eloquent and able of these reporters—the Abbé Terrai, the Abbé Chauvelin, Laverdi, La Chalotais, Castillion, Montclar—became the heroes of the hour.[1] "Dogmatic disputes, which had so long been forgotten, now resumed all the force of present interest and all the attraction of novelty; there was a universal eagerness to discover and apply these mysterious constitutions. Women and even children were animated with the ardour of old practised lawyers. Pascal became the idol, La Chalotais the hero, of the moment. Chalotais' "Compte Rendu," the glory of which the Jesuits have in vain attempted to take from him, those of the advocate-general, Joly de Fleury, of the procurator-general, Ripert de Montclar, of Laverdi, of the Abbé Chauvelin, were to be seen on every toilet table side by side with "Tanzai" and the "Bijoux Indiscrets." In the green-rooms of the theatres the performance of the evening was forgotten in the events of the morning. Tartuffe grew pale before Escobar, whilst in the large mansions of the Cité and the Isle Saint Louis, inhabited by the ancient families of the magistracy, as well as in the dark back-rooms in which generations of shopkeepers had been immured for ages, the discussion became more serious and undisguised, though no less passionate and ardent. Both sexes of every age and class seized with avidity the writings which poured forth from the office of the *Blancs Manteaux;* nothing was talked of but probabilism, surrenders of conscience, obsolete maxims, and mental reservations."[2]

Louis was not proof against the popular outburst of antagonism to an order which had done much, by its intrigues and its persecution of opponents, to merit it. He hesitated long, however, from scruples to which the word religion can hardly be applied in his case. His conscience—what conscience he had—was in the hands of a Jesuit confessor. The fear of consequences, too, kept him wavering. More than one of his predecessors on the throne of France had fallen by the

[1] See Villemain, Cours de Littérature Française, 3me. partie, 287, 288.

[2] St Priest, 26, 27, and see Barbier, iv. 427, etc.

instrument of Jesuit vengeance, and might not he be the next victim of some fanatic Clément, Ravaillac, or Châtel, some Jesuit Damiens in deadly earnest this time? "You will be damned," said he to Choiseul, who urged him to banish the order. Choiseul was sceptical, and hinted that his majesty had more reason than himself, on other grounds, to fear damnation. "Our situations are widely different," gravely rejoined Louis, "I am the anointed of the Lord." God, he added, would not permit his eternal damnation if, as king, he maintained the Catholic religion. As man he might apparently break every law, human and divine, if in his official capacity he kept the faith. This miserable idea of religion and morality kept him for a time suspended in the balance until Choiseul took him on another side. Over against the fear of assassination he placed the fear of revolt. He represented the hostility of the Parliament, and of the nation at large to be so inveterate that any attempt to ignore, or even underrate it would bring about a new Fronde. At this spectre of internal convulsion Louis took fright, and authorised the Parliament to deal the final blow. In anticipation of the event, he was so far in sympathy with it as to indulge in pleasantry at the expense of the discomfited fathers. "It will be pleasant to see Father Perusseau transformed into an abbé," laughed he. The Parliament went to work with zest, and fulminated a crushing condemnation of the society and its principles (August 1762),[1] as incompatible with the institutions of a civilised State, and subversive of both the temporal and spiritual authority. It denounced the society as an illegal association, which its members must disown by swearing adhesion to the anti-Ultramontane articles of 1682. After this decisive judgment, delivered in the royal name, it only remained for Louis to speak the final word. This he at length did, after two more years of suspense, in the declaration of November 1764,[2] which suppressed the society throughout France, while stopping short of the banishment of its members who should conform to the laws.

The hostility of the Parliament to the order did not exhaust itself in these drastic measures. Its suppression in France was followed by its expulsion from Spain, where the radical policy of Pombal was imitated by Aranda, who sent the unfortunate fathers in shiploads to Rome, and on the refusal of Clement to receive them, to Corsica (1767). Naples and Parma followed the example of Spain. These harsh proceedings reanimated the hatred of the Parliament of Paris, which now declared the Jesuits public enemies, and ordered their sum-

[1] Isambert, xxii. 328-387; Barbier, iv. 440, 441.
[2] *Ibid.*, xxii. 424.

mary expulsion from the kingdom, and petitioned the king to join the Catholic powers in a demand for their general suppression (9th May 1767).[1] Choiseul went even this length with the Parliament,[2] and the excommunication of the Duke of Parma by Clement provided him with a handle to unite the House of Bourbon in the policy of general suppression (December 1768). In the determination to avenge the insult to a branch of that house, the French seized Avignon, the Neapolitans Benevento, the Venetians Modena. Bavaria followed the example of the Bourbon sovereigns, and expelled the obnoxious fathers. Clement died broken-hearted under this series of blows (3rd February 1769). His successor, Clement XIV. (Ganganelli), at length yielded, after even Maria Theresa had added her voice to those of the other Catholic potentates in favour of suppression, and braved the fear of poison which haunted him as the probable penalty of his submission to the appeal of Catholic Christendom. On the 20th July 1773, appeared the decree which sealed their doom for forty years to come.[3]

Voltaire lays his finger on the secret of this astonishing revolution which brought into play the growing force of public opinion. He finds their nemesis in their own intolerant tactics as far as France was concerned. These tactics had aroused an ever-growing current of resentment in the nation, to which both Jansenists and philosophers, though from different motives, had given expression. "It is not Sanchez, nor Lessius, nor Escobar, nor the absurdities of the casuists that have undone the Jesuits. It is Le Tellier, it is the Bull which has exterminated them throughout almost the whole of France. The plough which the Jesuit Le Tellier caused to pass over the ruins of Port Royal has produced at the end of sixty years the fruits which they are reaping to-day. The persecutions which this violent scoundrel excited against the fanatic Jansenists rendered the Jesuits execrable to France."[4] Evidently opinion had made an enormous stride when the Parliament of Paris, seconded by most of the provincial Parliaments, could wrench up the very sheet-anchor of Ultramontane orthodoxy, and pitch it beyond the Alps as so much old iron. In part, the feat may be ascribed to the activity of the Christian conscience, in part to political motives, in part to the freer spirit that was struggling to throw off the shackles of tradition. It is this blow to tradition that is for us the most significant part of the movement. It was to a certain extent a despotic proceeding, doubtless, especially in Spain, where all criticism of Aranda's action was for-

[1] Isambert, xxii. 467.
[2] St Priest, 41.
[3] See St Priest, 39-95.
[4] Siècle de Louis XV., 178.

bidden on pain of high treason, and on the ground that no private person had a right to judge or interpret the will of the sovereign. In sapping tradition, despotism was, however, cutting the ground from beneath its own feet.

The part played by the influence of enlightened opinion gave great satisfaction to the philosophers. "You may be sure," wrote Voltaire to a correspondent, "that the revolution which has taken place in people's minds within the last twenty years has done much towards the expulsion of the Jesuits from so many States, and has encouraged princes to aim a blow at that idol of Rome which formerly made them all tremble." Strangely enough it was a philosopher of great reputation in Voltairian circles—the philosopher King of Prussia—that extended an asylum to the expatriated fathers, mainly on utilitarian grounds, and in spite of the remonstrances of his brother philosophers. Neither the philosophers nor the Parliament were strictly judicial, and it were to be wished that the spirit of partisanship had received less play in the conflict, otherwise admirable, with tradition and intolerant bigotry.

The Jesuits had not long to wait for their revenge. Three years after their suppression came the turn of the Parliaments—in Jesuit eyes, the day of retribution. The financial *debâcle* produced by the war proved a most embarrassing legacy to both government and Parliament. The obligations of the government were enormous. There was, for instance, a charge of 93 millions annually, on a capital of 2 milliards 157 millions, to meet, besides a host of other burdens. The subsidies to allies were in arrear to the extent of 33 millions odds, and added to the desperate straits of the controller-general. To dispense forthwith, in accordance with promise, with the whole of the additional taxes levied during the war was, in these circumstances, impossible. A controller of the most consummate ability could not have devised a way of escape without having resort to unpopular measures, and M. Bertin, Silhouette's successor, was a weak, pusillanimous individual, who grasped the first feasible expedient,[1] no matter what might come of it. He proposed, breach of public faith notwithstanding, to prolong the second twentieth, while suppressing the third, and the free gifts of the towns for six and five years respectively, and substitute a number of other taxes for the remission of the third twentieth and the increase of the capitation tax.[2] In further violation of public faith, he decreed the liquidation of the interest payable by the State, other than that on the funds of the

[1] Vie Privée, iv. 66, 67.

[2] Isambert, xxii. 392 (April-May 1763); Barbier, iv. 452 *et seq.*

Hôtel de Ville.[1] These subterfuges excited intense indignation, and the Parliament distilled this indignation in stronger doses than usual for the royal benefit, in the remonstrances with which it met these financial edicts. Its remonstrances were, of course, overridden in a *lit de justice* (31st May 1763).[2] "At the arrival of the king at the Palais de Justice," says Barbier, "and at his departure, there was not a single cry of 'Vive le roi' from any quarter whatsoever." It renewed its remonstrances,[3] in very outspoken language, in which the Court of Aides joined, not merely against oppressive taxation, but against the abuse of arbitrary power. It held up to reprobation the infraction of the royal word, and condemned the enforced registration of royal edicts, as subversive of the fundamental laws of the kingdom and compromising for the royal authority, as well as destructive of the constitutional rights of the Parliament. Malherbes, the president of the Court of Aides, was equally emphatic in his denunciation of the financial administration, in the light of the misery of the country, as unjust, anarchic, corrupt, oppressive, and supplicated the monarch to convince himself of the reality of this corruption and tyranny by listening to the voice of the people through the States-General. The provincial Parliaments, in virtue of their claim to solidarity as parts of a national body, added their remonstrances to those of the metropolitan court.[4] That of Rouen demanded a statement of the revenue and of the debts of the kingdom in order to advise as to remedial measures—assumed, in other words, the responsibility of the government to the nation, or at least to the Parliaments, for the expenditure of the taxes. On every hand resounded angry and outspoken criticisms and protests. No edicts, insist these would-be champions of the nation, can have legal or constitutional validity unless freely registered by the Parliaments. The nation is suffering from the tyranny of a corrupt administration, and its suffering has limits and ought to be redressed. The Parliaments are the bulwarks of the nation against this corrupt administration, which flourishes under the protection of a despotic *régime*, and they are determined to defend—and that as one body—the national interests. Such is the spirit of these outspoken protests that pour into the bureau of the chancellor. Such, too, is the spirit of the age which finds expression, outside the Parliaments, in pamphlets, placards, poems. Everybody reads the "Richesses de l'État,"[5] which advocates the reform of taxation on equitable principles. The word revolution is again heard in the streets and in the pulpits. "Sooner or later," cried

[1] Isambert, xxii. 393. [2] *Ibid.*, xxii. 393; Barbier, iv. 453.
[3] Barbier, iv. 454, 464, 469. [4] *Ibid.*, iv. 475. [5] *Ibid.*, iv. 454.

one of these irascible preachers in his soreness at the persecution of the Church, "revolution will break out in a kingdom in which the sceptre and the altar come into collision without ceasing. The crisis is violent, and the revolution must burst forth at no very distant date."[1] The preacher divined truly, but the causes of revolution were far more serious, lay far deeper in the constitution of society and the body politic than the ecclesiastical squabbles from which the heated imagination of a bigoted cleric sought to deduce them. Wiser men than he, however, already saw clearly the trend of things in its true light, should the nation rally in earnest to the Parliaments and the king continue his arbitrary tactics, his shameful dissipations and extravagance.[2] What the people thought of the king may be judged from the fact that on the occasion of the unveiling of the equestrian statue of Louis XV., the populace had no acclamations for the hero of Metz and Fontenoy, in spite of official assurances in the *Gazette de France*, that "the joyous acclamations of an innumerable crowd" greeted the ceremony in the Place Louis XV.[3] Public opinion, on the contrary, may be read, if the editor of the *Gazette* would only read, in the cutting distich found affixed one morning to the said statue, whose pedestal flattery had adorned with the four virtues—Strength, Peace, Prudence, and Justice:—

> "O la belle statue, O le beau piédestal,
> Les vertus sont à pied, et le vice à chéval."

Plain speaking with a vengeance, this. Note it, ye oily-tongued editors, that find acclamations in murmurs of indignation and glances of contempt. Note it, too, thou denizen of the Parc aux Cerfs, and know that public opinion spares not the Lord's anointed, even if, in virtue of an official faith, he escape damnation for the time being. By dint of flattery and superstition, Louis is unable to perceive the truth either as to himself or as to the situation, and determines to apply the gag henceforth to those who do. He suppressed the Parliamentary edicts, and forbade them to print such in future,[4] ordered Duke Fitzjames, governor of Languedoc, to arrest the refractory members of that of Toulouse,[5] and threatened others with similar treatment. Renewed protests and remonstrances, particularly on the part of that of Rouen, the most unbending of all, which responded to these threats by demitting office *en masse*. That of Paris made itself the mouthpiece of the complaints of its colleagues, and protested boldly

[1] Barbier, iv. 466. [2] See *ibid.*, iv. 455, 456. [3] *Ibid.*, iv. 460, 464.
[4] *Ibid.*, iv. 469. [5] *Ibid.*, iv. 481, 482.

against the slavery to which the nation was being reduced by these arbitrary and violent measures. To use force against the conservators of the laws was to teach the people the dangerous lesson that the law, and with it the throne, might be overwhelmed by anarchy.[1]

Louis XV. was not the man to persevere against this general antagonism, and relaxed his determination, and, as so often before, resorted to negotiation. A royal declaration solicited the opinion of the Parliaments and the other courts (Chamber of Accounts, Court of Aides)[2] on the means of remedying the financial chaos, and promised amelioration as to the more obnoxious taxes. M. Bertin was made secretary of State, and the controllership was conferred on M. de Laverdi, a member of the Parliament of Paris and an ardent Jansenist.[3] By an adroit stroke the Parliament was further conciliated, and at the same time involved in complications with the other Parliaments. The government found its opportunity in the action of the Parliament of Toulouse, which decreed the arrest of the Duke of Fitzjames.[4] The Paris Parliament annulled the decree as an infringement of the rights of the Court of Peers, and consequently of its jurisdiction. In this amenable mood it registered a royal declaration disclaiming any intention of governing contrary to the laws, and enjoining silence on the subjects lately in dispute. The admission was a humiliating one for an absolute potentate, who professed no responsibility except to God, to make, and on the strength of it the Parliaments of Rouen, Toulouse, Grenoble resumed their functions in triumph. The promise of amelioration was a delusive device, but meanwhile the public applauded the concession as a victory. The shower of pamphlets nevertheless continued, in spite of the injunction to cease writing and printing on State affairs.[5] The public laughed at these futile efforts to stem the tide of discussion, and sharper eyes than those of Louis XV. discerned in this interest in fiscal, economic, and constitutional questions the germs of future revolution. "All that I see," wrote Voltaire *àpropos* of this restlessness, "is laying the seeds of a revolution which will infallibly come, and which I shall not have the pleasure to witness. The French arrive at everything late, but they do arrive at last. The light is spreading so rapidly that it will burst out on the first opportunity, and then there will be a fine racket. The young people are fortunate; they will see a fine turn up."[6]

[1] See Rocquain, L'Esprit Révolutionnaire avant la Révolution, 243.
[2] Isambert, xxii. 397 (21st November 1763).
[3] Vie Privée, iv. 68; cf. Martin, Histoire de France, xvi. 229.
[4] Barbier, iv. 482, 483.
[5] Isambert, xxii. 400 (March 1764).
[6] See Rocquain, L'Esprit Révolutionnaire, 245.

During this short interval of truce, the Parliament found congenial occupation in a passing skirmish with the philo-Jesuit clergy —the Archbishop of Paris at their head—over the Bull. The pugnacious prelate denounced, in a pastoral letter, the parliamentary encroachment on the ecclesiastical jurisdiction in the action against the Jesuits. The Parliament replied by burning the archiepiscopal missive (*arrêt*, 21st January 1764), and Louis yielded so far to its demand for the punishment of the "incorrigible" prelate by exiling him once more. The pastoral letters of several of the archbishop's brethren—Langres, Amiens, Auch—who indulged in angry reproaches against the law courts as "enemies of the Church and of the government of Jesus Christ," obtained the same distinction at the hands of a godless magistracy. It even laid its sacrilegious hands on similar missives of the Pope himself, suppressing two papal briefs in defence of the Jesuits, and forbidding the introduction into France from Rome of any declaration without the royal sanction. It threatened his Holiness with the consequences of the enmity of France if he did not forbear to set himself up as a partisan of its enemies. The Parliament of Aix showed even more independence, and, Luther-like, consigned the papal deliverance to a fire, kindled on a scaffold in the midst of a vast crowd. The assembly of the clergy in 1765 espoused the cause of ecclesiastical independence, and reasserted the obligation of the Bull "as a dogmatic judgment of the Church universal." It debarred anew refractory dissidents from partaking of the sacrament. Its provocative language towards the Parliament and the Jansenists was the reply of the Jesuits to the triumph of their enemies. It opened afresh a barely healed sore, and filled up this brief interval of truce between king and Parliament with new recrimination over an old quarrel. The refusal of the communion to a dying member of the Ursuline Convent of St Cloud, by order of the archbishop, was followed by a counter-injunction of the Parliament. The priest who demanded permission to carry out the parliamentary order found the door of the convent shut in his face, and only succeeded in obtaining entrance and performing his office with the aid of the lieutenant of police. The Parliament next went the length of suppressing "the Acts of the Assembly of the Clergy"; and at the complaint of the bishops, Louis, who had obtained a *don gratuit* of twelve million livres from the assembly, vetoed the parliamentary decrees.[1] New demonstrations on the part of the Parliament, which at length assumed so menacing an aspect that the king, as a means of escape, asserted the absolute autonomy of the

[1] Isambert, xxii. 448 (15th September 1765).

temporal power, ordained the observance of the Gallican maxims of 1682, and once more enjoined silence.[1] The public had not heard the last of the Bull, however. There were more prosecutions for refusal of the sacrament, more recriminations between magistrates and bishops, more decrees of arrest against refractory priests, followed by interference of royalty, and finishing with the decree of banishment against the Jesuits. And therewith let this quarrel, which bulked so largely during fifty years of the century, sink into oblivion. Its subject-matter is of no interest now. It is memorable merely as an evidence of the antagonism of the Parliaments to Ultramontane and reactionary ecclesiastical ideas, memorable, too, as a sign of the decline of clerical domination and of the ever-growing assertiveness of secular opinion. The long continuance of the quarrel is a striking testimony of the impotence of even an absolute sceptre to control the minds of men, and the ominous fact is that this impotence is growing ever more patent. All these repressive decrees against the tide of opinion only serve to show that the tide is near the stage of flood.

Of greater interest is the renewal of the strife between arbitrary government, as represented by the fiscal and other measures of Louis XV., and limited government as represented by the remonstrances of the Parliaments. The signal was given by the Parliament of Rennes, which cherished a deep grudge against the governor of Brittany, the Duke of Aiguillon, whose administration it denounced as corrupt and oppressive. The duke, it further complained, was guilty of encroaching on the rights of the Provincial Estates. He was, besides, obnoxious as the champion of the Jesuits,[2] who were intriguing to avenge themselves on La Chalotais, the procurator-general of the Rennes Parliament, whose famous "Compte Rendu," or report, had materially contributed to discredit the order. In this intrigue the governor played a chief part. He bore La Chalotais mortal enmity for his temerity in exposing his inglorious conduct during the British invasion at St Cast. D'Aiguillon, instead of heading the onslaught, which resulted in the discomfiture of the British, witnessed it from a meal mill in the neighbourhood. "Our commander," wrote the procurator-general, "witnessed the action from a mill, where he covered himself with meal, instead of laurels."[3] His influence at court, in spite of the hostility of Choiseul, deprived the remonstrances of the Parliament of Brittany of effect. The vast majority of its members thereupon resigned (May 1765), and took to ventilating their grievances through the press—*i.e.*, pamphlets and

[1] Isambert, xxii. 450-455 (24th May 1766).
[2] Vie Privée, iv. 129-132.
[3] Besenval, i. 362, 363.

other effusions. Two anonymous letters conveyed to Louis in plain terms the general dissatisfaction with arbitrary government. Louis was furious, and directed Secretary St Florentin to discover the authors. St Florentin was a relative of D'Aiguillon, and set to work in the spirit of a partisan. He satisfied himself, on the assurance of Calonne, a young master of requests, of future fame, that the handwriting of the obnoxious epistles was that of La Chalotais. On this flimsy evidence, Louis, professing to see in the accused the ringleader of a vast Parliamentary conspiracy against the royal authority, ordered the arrest of the procurator-general, his son, and three councillors of the Parliament of Rennes, and despatched a special commission, with Calonne as accuser, to try the seditious magistrates. Calonne seized La Chalotais' papers, and with their assistance dressed up a charge of treason. The other Parliaments—that of Paris in the van—protested against the jurisdiction of this arbitrary tribunal. In deference to the advice of Choiseul, Louis yielded, and directed the case to be tried by the minority of the Parliament of Rennes. The accused declined to own the authority of a small faction which was but a tool in D'Aiguillon's hands, and their protests were emphasised by the renewed remonstrances of the Paris Parliament. This opposition evoked from Louis a strongly worded rebuke. At a *lit de justice* in March 1766, he rated the insubordination of the Parliaments, and saw in it an evidence of "the pernicious system of unity," which interfered with his absolute rights as monarch. His irate tone was worthy of Louis XIV. and the seventeenth century, but singularly tame as coming from the sottish paramour of Madame Dubarri, the successor of Pompadour, who virtually occupied the place of the great Louis in the age of Jean Jacques Rousseau. "In my person alone resides the sovereign power; to me alone pertains the legislative power, without dependence and without partition; the public order emanates entirely from me." From these premises came the conclusion, in threatening tones, that he would be compelled by the insubordination of the Parliaments to use the power, derived from God, to preserve his people from its sinister effects. The contrast between Louis XV. as Jupiter Tonans, and Louis XV. the puppet of a common prostitute, must have suggested strange reflections to these grave men of the law. They were not disconcerting at any rate, for the men of the law resolved, in spite of this lecture on the divine rights of kings, to maintain the right of the accused to a fair trial before a legitimate tribunal, and remonstrated once more to this effect. They gave his majesty the full benefit of the theory of divine right, however, and yielded so far to the force of tradition as to decree their accept-

ance of Louis' opinion of his royal status and function. From the consequences of this admission they sought to save themselves by the assertion that their opposition was in the name and the interest of the king. The result showed that if Louis was theoretically king by divine right, the sceptre he wielded was no longer that of Louis XIV., and the only remedy on this occasion was, as usual, concession and compromise. He recalled D'Aiguillon, and reinstated the majority of the Parliament of Rennes, while banishing La Chalotais, who had been thrown into the Bastille.

Meanwhile M. Laverdi was sweating at his finance, and like his predecessor, had already reached breaking point, was proving as impotent as M. Bertin to help Louis to fulfil his pledges to the nation. The renewed prolongation of several obnoxious taxes (the second twentieth, the "gifts" from the towns, for example, in 1767) gave the final blow to the public credit, and roused the parliamentary outcry once more. Laverdi had to go, especially as he had made himself obnoxious to Choiseul in the Brittany affair,[1] leaving the debt increased by 115 millions since the peace, and the next year's revenue anticipated by 32½ millions. His successor was M. D'Invau, councillor of State and nominee of Choiseul (September 1768). More prorogation expedients and more remonstrances signified that M. D'Invau was no improvement on his predecessor. So long as a minister could only borrow and impose new taxes to pay these loans, there could be no improvement. Each controller was simply overworking the machine till the decisive crash should at last render it incapable of working longer without radical repair. In vain did M. D'Invau propose the reduction of court salaries and other waste. The court would not hear of his plans, and M. D'Invau gave up the thankless task after about a year's trial. On the recommendation of the Chancellor Maupeou, his place was taken by the Abbé Terrai (December 1769), like Laverdi, a member of the Parliament, and famous for his opposition to the Jesuits. Abbé Terrai was the only possible man; unscrupulous, dissipated, without conscience, but with plenty of intelligence. His contemporaries credit him with the faculty of supreme indifference towards good or evil, who keeps women like any other rake of an abbé, and speaks of his amorous connections with cynical frankness. "Villain," "monster," are the epithets with which his official personality is distinguished.[2] He was in truth the incarnation of effrontery. He operated on the nation with the impassivity of the butcher, laughing sardonically at the stinging witticisms with which the nation avenged itself. He became known at court as "the spoilt

[1] Vie Privée, iv. 131. [2] *Ibid.*, iv. 264, 265.

child, because his hand touched everything; and as the long broom, because it reached everywhere." "Why, monsieur," angrily objected some one to his edicts, "this is taking it out of the people's pockets." "Where else would you have me take it?" laughed the abbé. On another occasion, finding himself, on his entrance to the palace, squeezed by the crowd of courtiers, and requesting the liberty to pass, a voice called out, "Room here only for honest people." The abbé received the cut with the most imperturbable coolness. He was certainly a most promising candidate for the red hat, to which he regarded his office of controller as a stepping-stone, in spite of his numerous mistresses and his cynical want of faith. A bribe of half a million of francs would, he was certain, work the oracle in due time.[1]

Terrai looked into the coming year and found no revenue therein, the whole of that of 1770 being anticipated, the deficit, on this score, amounting to 161 millions. Partial bankruptcy was the main idea of his complicated operations, which consisted of suspensions, conversions, reductions, liquidations, forced loans, and what not, and served to keep him and his treasure-bag floating to the end of the year. He manipulated the Parliament by sparing the funds in which its members were interested, and got his edicts passed without much difficulty. In the country, litigations, suicides, angry protests, showed that the Parliaments were not in this matter the representatives of the national interests. To increase the bitterness of public feeling came a succession of bad harvests and a widespread dearth. The people complained loudly of the free exportation of grain, which the government, in deference to the theories of the economists, had sanctioned in 1764.[2] The complaint was ill-founded, export being regulated by supply,[3] but starving people cannot be expected to welcome economic experiments at a time of widespread distress and discontent, if these theories do not immediately turn into bread. The outcry against the monopolists, who speculated on the misery of the people by storing up corn and selling it in time of dearth at exorbitant prices, was more justifiable. The Parliament of Rouen prosecuted these defaulters as guilty of contravening the edicts regulating the sale of grain. The government interfered. The Parliament protested, and accused the government of favouring corruption and lawlessness for selfish ends (October 1768). The government, nay, Louis himself, was speculating in corn, raising the price for the personal benefit

[1] Vie Privée, iv. 266. [2] Isambert, xxii. 403, 404.

[3] "Il nous a paru necessaire de fixer un prix au grain au dela duquel toute exportation hors du royaume en serait interdite."

of the monarch and his creatures (*La Société Malisset*). Such was the charge known under the significant phrase, *Pacte de Famine*. The anger of the starving people found vent in acts of violence and incendiarism. At Rouen the mob pillaged the convents, and blood was spilt in the streets.[1] In the capital seditious placards conveyed the warning of the popular indignation. One of these dubbed the king "the commercialist," and hinted that a second Damiens might avenge the people. In one of the ports of Brittany starving women set fire to the barges laden with corn. The Parliaments multiplied their remonstrances, and each year saw a new crop of placards and pamphlets of increasing bitterness and boldness against the monopolists. A decree of council at length suppressed the free export of corn (July 1770),[2] but Terrai and his fellow-monopolists of the *Société Malisset* found the means of continuing their nefarious traffic notwithstanding. Louis himself scanned with interest the reports of prices which were daily laid on his writing table, and speculated on the figures like an ordinary trader. It was an evil day for royalty when in the popular imagination—exaggerated, no doubt—the higher classes, from the king downwards, appeared as conspirators against the starving people! Hunger makes harsh critics, and while luxury, dissipation, extravagance were reigning at Versailles, the people in many districts, during the years 1768-70, were living on bran and herbs.[3] What a terrible retribution for these higher classes, from the king downwards, was lurking in facts like these!

Notwithstanding the widespread misery, the marriage of Louis' grandson and now, through the death of his father, the Dauphin, his heir, with Marie Antoinette of Austria, in 1770, was celebrated with unlimited extravagance. The bride was escorted to Versailles with an ostentatious splendour regardless of expense. In display, jewellery, banquets, balls, fêtes, theatricals, fireworks, the utmost disregard was shown for an embarrassed exchequer. The representation of the opera "Castor and Pollux" cost a million francs. A trip to Fontainebleau swallowed two millions. Enormous fortunes were made by contractors, masters of ceremonies, and their assistants.[4] "Universal pillage," is the comment of a contemporary, and yet in the counties of La Marche and the Limousin four thousand persons were computed to have died of starvation, whilst riots in towns like Besançon and Tours attested the desperate straits to which the want of bread was driving the people. Angry pens were set in motion in testimony

[1] Rocquain, 268. [2] Isambert, xxii. 499.
[3] Rocquain, 274, and see Martin, Histoire de France, xvi. 291-298.
[4] Richelieu, Mémoires, ii. 264, 265.

against this iniquitous waste for the amusement of idle courtiers. "I propose," wrote one of these patriotic scribblers, "that the twenty millions" (the sum at which he computed the expenditure in amusements) "should be subtracted from the taxes for the year, especially the land tax. Then, instead of amusing the idle people of the court and the capital with vain and momentary diversions, the miserable cultivators would be filled with joy, the whole nation would be made to participate in this event, and to the most remote corners of the kingdom the exclamation would resound, 'Long live Louis the Beloved!' This kind of festival would reflect more real and lasting glory on the king than all the pomp and pageantry of Asiatic entertainments."[1] This advice was not taken, and Abbé Terrai had to pay the penalty. "How do you find the fêtes?" asked the king of the controller-general. "Ah, sire," was the witty response, "unpayable."[2]

While the Parliaments, under the manipulation of a clever controller-general, were all too susceptible to selfish interests, they were exceedingly touchy on points affecting their own rights and dignity. The *cause célèbre* of the Duke D'Aiguillon afforded that of Paris an opportunity of challenging once more, in its own defence, the claims of absolute monarchy. La Chalotais, whose spirit had not been broken by imprisonment and banishment, demanded the trial of D'Aiguillon. The Parliament and the Estates of Brittany joined in the demand, and adduced in support of it various grave charges, among others, that of suborning witnesses to give false evidence against La Chalotais. The duke ultimately himself solicited a trial before the Court of Peers, associated with the Parliament of Paris. Louis accorded the demand, and presided himself during the hearing of the case. What was the astonishment of the Parliament and the public when he suddenly forestalled a decision by letters patent, declaring the proceedings null and void, and white-washing the duke. To this arbitrary interference with the course of justice the Parliament responded by a decree depriving the duke of the rights and privileges of the peerage, until he was cleared of the accusations against his honour.[3] Louis answered by nullifying the parliamentary decree and expunging from the register the minutes of the process. The expostulations of the Parliaments of Bordeaux and Rennes were met by the arrest of several of their members, and by an edict prohibiting the Parliaments of the kingdom from making

[1] Vie Privée, iv. 185.
[2] Bachaumont, Méms. Hist. et Litteraires (Barrière), 331.
[3] Besenval, i. 364.

use henceforth of the terms "unity" and "indivisibility," or demitting their functions as a mark of their opposition to the royal decrees, on pain of destitution and punishment as rebels, and denying their claim to be "the representatives of the nation, the necessary interpreters of the royal will, the guardians of the public administration and of the performance of the duties of the sovereignty."[1] Once more Louis spoke as king by divine right, "holding his crown from God alone," wielding its powers "without dependence or division," denying the right of remonstrance and the possibility of any limitation of his authority. After its admissions on a former occasion, the Paris Parliament could not complain of this language. Historically, too, Louis had the best of it when he informed it, through the chancellor, Maupeou, at the *lit de justice* held in consequence of its refusal to register, that the Parliaments were originally created by the sovereign (some of them were only of comparatively recent creation, in fact), and derived their existence and their powers from him, and that the legislative function pertained to the Crown, not to them. They were merely the organs of the royal will, and their political function was at the most only advisory. They were, therefore, bound to obey the royal commands; otherwise they would be the masters, not the officers of the monarch. On the other hand, Louis forgot to remind himself that his office of king was originally elective, and by no means the unconditional gift of God, as he pretended, and that in arrogating to himself powers, unlimited by any national control, he was seeking illegally to enlarge his authority equally with the Parliament. Moreover, even a monarch by God's grace, in the most literal meaning of the phrase, was not entitled to outrage the course of justice at will, and the contention of the Parliament that it could not be required to approve of actions "contrary to the fundamental laws of the State" was entirely justifiable in view of the fact that the Parliaments were the organs of justice. However absolute the king, he could not pretend to be above justice, and those who were intrusted with the dispensation of justice were quite entitled to tell him so and to protest with all their might against unjust courses. To require the judges to submit to be the instruments of the arbitrary contravention of the rights of the subject, as guaranteed by the laws, was pure despotism. Still, the admission that "kings are the images of God on earth," made by the advocate-general, Seguier, might cover almost any abuse of the royal power, and this royal image of the Deity being there to command his will in a *lit de justice*, there was nothing for it but to submit. But in so doing the Parliament registered the sen-

[1] Isambert, xxii. 501-509 (December 1770).

tence of its own impotence (7th December 1770). The members could, however, still honour their convictions—at their peril it is true—by suspending their functions, and not only did they do so, but met an order to resume them, repeated four times in succession, with a dogged refusal. "We will be neither the organs nor the puppets of despotism," cried the angry magistrates.

The Parliament could count on the moderation of Choiseul, but the influence of the minister had been gradually undermined by the intrigues of Madame Dubarri, the chancellor, Maupeou, and Terrai. The Prince of Condé, who attempted to mediate, was checkmated by the chancellor, who resented his interference as an attempt to undermine his authority.[1] Maupeou was too strong even for Choiseul, who was curtly dismissed from his post on the 24th December 1770. The way was now clear for Maupeou's decisive stroke. The only difficulty was to screw the courage of the vacillating king up to striking point. Madame Dubarri succeeded in achieving even this part of the intrigue. She had recently purchased the portrait of Charles I. by Van Dyck, and cleverly used this work of art to terrify Louis into compliance. Pointing to the figure of Charles, "La France," she exclaimed (the name with which she usually dubbed Louis), "thy Parliament will also cut off thy head." This sally had the desired effect. On the night of the 19th-20th January 1771, Louis sent a company of musketeers with his ultimatum to each member to sign forthwith yea or nay to the order (*lettre de jussion*) to resume his duty. The great majority signed no, while forty, who had signed yes, retracted the following day. Next night one hundred and thirty members received their letters of exile along with a decree of council confiscating their charges and declaring them and their children incapable of holding any juridical office.[2] Thirty-eight other members who had not received the summary summons to resign, declared their adhesion to the refusal of their colleagues and shared their fate. The Parliament being thus effaced, Maupeou authorised, provisionally, the royal council to perform its functions,[3] after the Court of Aides had refused to do so. The lower courts—the Châtelet, the Court of Aides, the Chamber of Accounts—protested against the tyrannic tactics of the chancellor, and M. Malherbes, speaking for the Aides, again called for the convocation of the States-General as the body "best fitted to inform the king whether the cause which we defend be that of the whole people by whom and for whom you reign." Malherbes paid for his boldness by a letter of exile. The provincial

[1] Besenval, i. 371.
[2] Isambert, xxii. 510.
[3] Isambert, xxii. 510, 511.

Parliaments added their protests to those of the inferior courts of the capital, but these official expostulations were tame compared with the effusions of the printing press and the criticisms of the salons and the streets. The drawing-rooms were turned into debating societies, in which the women distinguished themselves by the verve of a passionate partisanship.[1] Law and history found in them eloquent exponents. The crowds which had hailed the exiled members with acclamations, received their substitutes of the council with hisses. These functionaries entered on and performed their duties under the protection of a military guard. The advocates refused to plead; the *greffiers* resigned. Placards and pamphlets by the score derided or threatened the king and the chancellor. Maupeou attempted to allay the ferment by a reform edict, in which the sins of the Parliament were painted in lurid colours, and several reforms, laudable enough in themselves, were announced. The office of judge should no longer be purchaseable. He should be paid a salary, and be bound down not to accept presents. Free justice and incorruptible judges should rise from the ruins of a corrupt institution. Reform received its initial expression in the substitution of six courts for the Paris Parliament within the area of its jurisdiction, which was too large to admit of the prompt and inexpensive dispensation of justice.[2] There was much to be said for Maupeou's proposals, but their enlightened tendency did not commend itself to the sympathisers with a body which had the virtue of being in opposition to a hated *régime*. The edict, like its predecessor, raised a storm of indignation and excited the protests of the princes of the blood,[3] a number of peers, the Court of Aides, and the provincial Parliaments. Maupeou was not to be shaken, and replied by exiling the princes of the blood and suppressing the Court of Aides, while Louis sanctioned the reform in a *lit de justice*.[4] "I shall never alter my course," said he, translating the energy and determination of the chancellor. Renewed outburst of placarding and pamphleteering, in which the chancellor was ridiculed, threatened, hanged, over and over again, the women being especially outrageous.[5] Maupeou retaliated by his paid scribblers, of whom he maintained a large number, and who multiplied their attacks on the Parliaments. He laid hands, through the police, on the writers on the parliamentary side, and prohibited the distribution or sale of their offensive effusions. The Ultramontanist clergy, who saw

[1] Besenval, i. 368.
[2] Isambert, xxii. 512-515, and 515-518 (February 1771).
[3] Besenval, i. 369, 370.
[4] Isambert, xxii. 522 (April 1771).
[5] Besenval, i. 374-376.

the hand of Providence in the fall of their parliamentary enemies, seconded the chancellor's polemists by the thunders of the pulpit. The Jesuits added the assistance of their intrigues. A still more effective stroke was the suppression of the provincial Parliaments by military force, and the substitution in their stead of councils of justice as at Paris.[1]

The fall of the Parliaments was as sudden, as astonishing as the suppression of the Jesuits. Contemporaries are at variance as to the causes of this revolutionary event. The Parliaments discovered in their destruction the hands of the Jesuits. They regarded the Archbishop of Paris as the mentor, if not the inspirer of the chancellor. Others saw in his conduct merely the shift of circumstances.[2] To others the catastrophe was due to the desire of Maupeou and D'Aiguillon to discredit Choiseul, who supported the Parliaments.[3] Still another contemporary view is that the chancellor was actuated by personal hatred of a body of which he had been first president, and whose scrutiny of his personal cupidity he had but too good reason to fear.[4] Others, again, explained the disaster as a desperate expedient to forestall opposition to a ruinous financial policy. The truth probably lies in a combination of these causes, of which the most potent was the royal determination to be rid of a body which, in its better moods, was the expression of the national opposition to a spendthrift and degrading *régime*. The controller afforded the best commentary on the action of the chancellor by multiplying his oppressive and arbitrary edicts. Additional taxes, as well as the augmentation of the ordinary means of revenue—*tailles*, *vingtièmes*, *gabelles*, etc.[5]—were the fruits of this policy of gag. Nevertheless, the deficit for 1774 was over forty millions. The chancellor's reforms, as interpreted by the controller's expedients, were at least expensive, and the starving people was not inclined to welcome them as from above, the divinity of the kingship notwithstanding. In the person of a drivelling sensualist, who had become the slave of a passion scandalous even in the midst of the abominations of the Parc aux Cerfs, the Bourbon monarchy was already a worn-out tradition, a heartless and profligate despotism, an intolerable scandal and disgrace. Nor were voices wanting to proclaim the fact more crassly than in the official remonstrances of the Parliaments. The monarchy was in the evil plight of having rasped susceptibilities, begotten animosities which were to become a permanent force in the nation, in the growing

[1] See Rocquain, 281-294.
[2] Vie Privée, iv. 205.
[3] Besenval, i. 366.
[4] Besenval, i. 365-367 and 421-424.
[5] Isambert, xxii. 540-544 (November 1771).

reaction from absolutism in favour of liberty. Drastic measures might bring grist to the royal mill for the time being; they were not the means of retaining a people's allegiance. The fruit of this assertion of absolutism was the appearance of a school of writers who, in contrast to the reforming philosophers and economists, boldly attacked the monarchy itself. The party of "the patriots" emerged from this upheaval into direct and threatening line against the institutions of an effete despotism. These political pamphleteers do not shun plain and even strong language in controverting the absolutist maxims enunciated in the royal edicts. They do not hesitate to point their arguments with references to the British constitution, which Montesquieu had revealed in such attractive colours. To the divine rights of kings and the dogma of passive obedience, they oppose the rights of man, particularly the right of resistance to an authority that ignored and contravened the laws. Maupeou might suppress the Parliaments; he found it difficult to gag the public, in spite of the activity of the police in burning pamphlets and arresting their authors and even their readers. The pamphlets of the patriots took the place of the remonstrances of the Parliaments in fanning the popular animosity, and far surpassed them in their bold advocacy of freedom.[1]

It is questionable whether the Parliaments were worth all the passionate print expended on them. Their constitution was open to grave objections. The members bought their offices and handed them down to their children. They showed themselves disposed at times, as we have seen, to sacrifice the national interest to their own corporate or personal advantage. They were not the enlightened advocates of toleration and intellectual freedom. While they opposed the Jesuits and the Ultramontanist clergy, they persecuted the Protestants and the leaders of the free-thought movement. The tragic fate of Lally reminds us that the dispensation of justice was not uninfluenced by political partisanship. Their striving to usurp the functions of the States-General by a union of the provincial courts with that of the capital was a very questionable policy. The nation could never be adequately represented by a body which tended to become a venal oligarchy. On the other hand, they had to a certain extent served the useful function of an opposition to a government alike arbitrary and inefficient. They could claim with considerable justification to be the only organised resistance to despotism, the organ of the national dissatisfaction with an unpopular king and an unpopular chancellor, the traditional opponents of the tyranny of

[1] See Rocquain, 298-306.

the feudal nobility, the steady enemies of Ultramontanism and clerical pretension.[1]

SOURCES OF THIS CHAPTER.—Isambert, Recueil, xxii.; Journal de Barbier; Vie Privée; St Priest, History of the Fall of the Jesuits; Voltaire, Siècle de Louis XV.; Mémoires de Besenval (Barrière); Villemain, Cours de Littérature Française; Voltaire, Histoire du Parlement; Rocquain, L'Esprit Révolutionnaire avant La Révolution; Mémoires du Duc de Richelieu (Barrière); Martin, Histoire de France, xvi.; Bachaumont, Mémoires Historiques et Litteraires (Barrière).

[1] See Besenval, i. 354-357.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### Louis XV. and Choiseul.—The Scandalous Dubarri Régime and its Horrible Finale (1766-1774).

PEACE concluded, Choiseul's brain teemed with projects for the rehabilitation of France. He would yet be revenged on Britain and Prussia, and therefore cultivated the Austrian Alliance, sedulously nursed the Family Compact, and, as contemporaries believed, but without sufficient evidence, intrigued to foment rebellion in America and party strife in Great Britain itself. The indolence of Louis XV., whose energy, after the fatigues of two wars and the long drain of debauchery, had fallen below zero, precluded the possibility of another international conflict. The attempt of Choiseul to force the hand of the apathetic monarch was, in fact, to cost him his place in seven years' time. During the interval between the conclusion of the war and his dismissal he was virtually prime minister, and worked hard, as minister of war, marine, and foreign affairs, to merit the belief of his countrymen in his genius and to realise the hope of regeneration and retribution under his auspices. Brilliant he was, polished and magnificent, and decidedly *distingué*, if only the ungainliness of his figure and the redness of his hair could have been altogether ignored. With his facility for acquiring the ideas of others and bringing them forward *àpropos*, he might have passed for a great statesman. Contemporaries expected great things at any rate, but when contemporaries had time to reflect, *i.e.*, after his dismissal, they concluded, as usual, that they had overrated the brilliant minister.[1] They forgot that although Choiseul had the best intentions and no little ability, there was not much chance for the minister of such a monarch to be a great statesman. Louis would not reform his ways, would continue to be a mere puppet in the hands of intriguing women—women of what stamp we shall soon see. Considering these untoward circumstances, Choiseul did wonder-

[1] See judgment of M. Meilhan in Mélanges d'Histoire et de Littérature, app. to Du Hausset's Mémoires.

fully. He economised the expenditure of the foreign office, cutting off, or reducing the subsidies to foreign States, with a saving to the treasury of twenty millions a year, according to M. Meilhan's computation. No minister since Sully, if we may believe the same contemporary authority, had husbanded so carefully and made such good uses of the resources at his command. Pity that he did not put a hand to the finances in order the better to merit the comparison. As we have seen, his nominees to this crucial department did not reflect much credit on his sagacity, but then with such a king, and such a court, and such a load of debt, and such a floodtide of discontent, it is questionable whether even a Sully could have cleared the rocks of bankruptcy. Even a Turgot and a Necker were to fail to weather the breakers. What goodwill and patriotism could achieve Choiseul tried to do, and succeeded tolerably in doing. He reformed the organisation of the army, and increased its efficiency by insisting on regimental uniformity, depriving the colonels of the right of appointing their officers, taking the recruiting of companies out of the corrupt hands of captains, and offering a pension equal to full pay to privates serving twenty-four years with the colours. Choiseul deserves, too, the credit of the resurrection of the French navy. In less than ten years he had raised the number of ships of the line to sixty-four, that of frigates to fifty. To obtain a supply of building material, he rendered the Gave and the Adour capable of floating the timber of the Pyrenean forests down into the harbour of Bayonne. The reform of the *personnel* and organisation of the navy was, however, baulked by aristocratic opposition to the introduction of captains of merchantmen, who had distinguished themselves in the war, into posts which, by traditional right, were the preserve of the nobility.[1] In a moment of chagrin at the rebuff Choiseul threw up the ministry of marine in 1766, and resumed the official direction of foreign affairs.

As foreign minister he momentarily raised the prestige of France, if not the moral reputation of its government, by the annexation of Corsica in 1768-69. The inability of Genoa to reduce the Corsican patriots after a long and bloody struggle, of which Paoli was the soul, furnished him with the opportunity of aggrandising France at little cost. The Genoese offered the island to Louis XV. in payment of the debt, which the republic owed to France, and an indemnity of two millions. Choiseul grasped at the offer in spite of the hopes which he held out to a Corsican embassy of the recognition of their independence, in return for an annual tribute. He adroitly disarmed the rivalry of Great Britain and the jealousy of Austria by representing the cession

[1] Vie Privée, iv. 94, 95.

of the island by the Genoese merely as security for the payment of its debt to France. The transaction reflects credit on the diplomatic cleverness, if not on the political morality of the minister, and coming as it did after the disastrous Peace of Versailles, served to salve the wounded pride and flatter the patriotism of his countrymen. The reduction of the high-spirited Corsicans, who counted on British jealousy of French aggression in the Mediterranean, was not, however, effected without considerable expense and effort. French garrisons were already in possession of Ajaccio, Bastia, and San Fiorenzo, under pretext of French mediation between the Genoese Government and its refractory subjects. Lieutenant-General Chauvelin landed with reinforcements, and summoned the Corsicans to recognise the sovereignty of Louis XV. on pain of being treated as rebels. Paoli and his compatriots returned a spirited reply, denouncing the French minister, "who had treated them as a flock of sheep to be sold at the market" (28th August 1768), and offered a desperate resistance. They routed the French in a fierce engagement on the Golo, and drove them with a loss of 1,200 men back on Bastia. It was not till Choiseul had landed a large army corps under Count de Vaux in the spring of 1769 that Paoli, worsted in an engagement at the Bridge of Golo, and deserted by many of his followers, abandoned the struggle, and found a refuge in England (June 1769).[1] The French consoled themselves with the too facile reflection that they had found in Corsica compensation for Canada, and its conquest, carried out in the summer of 1769, effaced the remembrance of Choiseul's failure to find in Guiana, to which he had despatched an expedition in 1763, a new field for French enterprise on the American continent.

This transaction, viewed from the point of view of morality, may be regarded as a prelude to another of far more moment, in which Choiseul's diplomacy was by no means brilliant. In the affair of the first partition of Poland the duke was a mere nullity. To deal creditably with the Polish question was indeed beyond the powers of Choiseul, or of France for that matter. The national interests of Poland had been sacrificed to the alliance with Austria and Russia. Poland had been the highroad of Russian armies, and the Poles had looked in vain for protection to Louis XV., who had previously espoused their cause through his secret agents at Dresden and Warsaw, with something like real concern. After the crushing events of that war and the alienation of Polish sympathy from France, Louis and his minister were not in a position to avert the catastrophe. To such a condition of impotence had France been brought under the auspices

[1] Vie Privée, iv. 109-115; Voltaire, Siècle de Louis XV.

of such a king. In spite of the brilliancy of Choiseul, despite, too, military and naval reform, Louis XV. counted for too little to affect the policy of spoliation on which the three potentates of Berlin, St Petersburg, and Vienna were agreed.[1] Poniatowski, the candidate of Catherine for the throne of August III., had secretly offered his alliance to Louis XV., in order to realise, by French aid, the prospective reforms which he knew that his Russian patroness would from selfish motives resist. Louis paid no heed to the secret overtures forwarded by the French agent at Warsaw, and allowed events to take their course. He posed officially as the supporter of liberty of election and the integrity of the Polish kingdom, but this verbal zeal in behalf of a humanitarian policy simply meant inaction. If the Poles should seek to assert their liberty in opposition to their greedy neighbours, Louis was not the man to interfere actively on the side of liberty. Frederick and Catherine understood this, and the assurances of the French monarch were mere films in the presence of the united forces which Frederick and Catherine could bring to bear on the situation. "Liberty of election" in these circumstances resolved itself into the election of Poniatowski as the mere tool of Russo-Prussian interests, and the new puppet king was very soon to discover that his friends at St Petersburg and Berlin expected a very substantial return in gratitude. "Maintain neutrality," wrote Praslin to the French agent. "Keep on good terms with all parties. What more can the Poles want?" The Poles, however, expected a great deal more than this from Louis' championship of liberty of election, but with a Russian army within two days' march of Warsaw, Hennin, the French agent, wrote in vain the most piteous appeals to Versailles for the fulfilment of pledges given. Russian bayonets struck terror into the national and patriotic party of the Branicki, the Radziwill, etc., and drove them from the Diet. The French ambassador, the Marquis de Pauling, protested and retired, along with the diplomatic agents, Hennin and Mounet, from Warsaw, but the party of the Czartoriski made no account of a protest which was composed of mere words, and the partisan Diet elected Stanislaus Poniatowski king on the 7th September 1764. "France," remarks M. de Broglie, "had disappeared, blamed by some, hated by others, despised by all."[2]

The fruits of the astute diplomacy of Berlin and St Petersburg were not long in appearing. Stanislaus was told that the reform of the Polish constitution and the abolition of the vicious *liberum veto*,

[1] See on this subject Broglie, King's Secret, ii. 195, 196.

[2] *Ibid.*, ii. 228.

which perpetuated anarchy, were positively out of the question. He was required, too, to give equal rights with Catholics to Protestant and Greek Christians. This was an enlightened demand, but it was actuated mainly by political motives. It could only aggravate political anarchy by religious dissension and fanaticism, for the vast Catholic majority would never consent to give political rights to the sectaries, and the upheaval would afford pretexts for interference to the two watchdogs which were waiting to fall on their prey. Stanislaus grew restive, showed for a brief interval a disposition to kick over the traces, took fright at the menace of rebellion by the party that had opposed his election, and whose leaders had in their turn yielded to the gold of Russia, and finally capitulated to the Russian ambassador, Prince Repnin. In October 1767 the Diet submissively registered the order of the Czarina to grant political rights to dissenters. The measure merited in some respects the plaudits of the philosophers who saw in it the triumph of toleration. "Your generous resolve to establish liberty of conscience," wrote Voltaire to Catherine, "is a boon which the human race ought to celebrate." The plaudits of the philosophers were singularly guileless. It was not to enthrone humanity in its sacred rights that Repnin and his Cossacks kept watch at Warsaw. A humane policy would have hesitated to provoke bigotry to justify its intolerance, in the name of liberty, in a patriotic endeavour to resist foreign dictation. The fanatic and patriotic opposition organised itself into the hostile confederation of Bar (February 1768). Its object was expressed in its motto, "Aut vincere aut mori pro religione et libertate," and on its banner was emblazoned a crucifix and an image of the Virgin. Under this banner armed bands of priests and peasants rose and fought, spreading carnage and conflagration throughout the Ukraine and Podolia. Their leaders despatched an envoy to Versailles to solicit the assistance of France. Unfortunately for Polish independence, Louis and Choiseul had stood passively by while the iron ring of Russian, Prussian, and Austrian aggression was being formed around Poland. Choiseul now bestirred himself in spasmodic sort of fashion to break in with the influence of France, sending money and generals to the confederates, and intriguing at Constantinople against Russia. It was reserved to Turkey, by the strange whirl of political interests, to come forth as the champion of Polish liberty and Christian bigotry. Had the Sultan acted promptly, his intervention might have been efficacious, but while the Turks were slowly mobilising, Russian troops, assisted by hordes of Cossacks, crushed the insurrection in the Ukraine, amid shocking scenes of massacre and plunder. In

the campaign against the Turks victory likewise attended the arms of Catherine, and though Turkish intervention stirred the Polish patriots to further efforts, the country was ravaged and ruined to no other purpose than its final subjection. The adhesion of Kaunitz to the policy of Frederick and Catherine, and the simultaneous occupation of Polish Prussia by Prussian troops, on the pretext of guarding against the plague, and of Zips on the Polish-Hungarian frontier by the Austrians, foreshadowed the doom of spoliation for the unhappy country. Choiseul tried hard to avert it, but his measures were really a confession of weakness. To suggest a marriage between the widowed Louis XV. and Maria Theresa's eldest daughter, in the hope of propping up the tottering Austro-French alliance, and detaching Kaunitz from Frederick, was really too laughable a device to merit serious consideration. Louis XV., hero of the *Parc aux Cerfs* and paramour of Dubarri, marrying a decent young girl was certainly one of the most audacious propositions in the history even of royal connubial affairs. To send Dumouriez to reorganise the confederates, and soldiers of fortune to assist them, was merely to inspire hopes that could only deepen the pathos of the inevitable tragedy.

Before that tragedy supervened, Choiseul was no more, in a political sense. He had become deeply involved in other projects of the flighty sort, meet only for a statesman of the "brilliant" type to cherish. He had not forgotten his grudge against Great Britain, and in addition to saving Poland, he hoped by means of the Family Compact to invade and chastise perfidious Albion. The quarrel of Charles III. with his Britannic majesty over the right to the possession of the Falkland Islands threatened war. Charles, with a full treasury, a well-equipped navy, and the Family Compact to fall back on, was not a man to be argued with, and had simply sent a frigate to cannonade Fort Egmont, and take the British garrison prisoner. The ferment produced at London by these tactics expedited the bellicose preparations which foreboded a rupture. Choiseul, if his enemies at court may be believed, while officially counselling moderation, secretly urged his ally to refuse to give up the islands, in the hope of finding a *casus belli* which might be the signal for a general war in the west and the east to the profit of France, and the retribution of its arch-enemy.[1] It was mainly this bellicose mood that forfeited him the king's confidence. The contempt which he felt and manifested for Madame Dubarri, exposed him to the machinations of the dangerous clique of the favourite, of

[1] Broglie, ii. 273.

whom his enemies, Richelieu, Maupeou, Aiguillon, Terrai, were the obsequious worshippers, and contributed in addition to undo him. The negotiations between Madrid and London were protracted, and Choiseul, insinuated this hostile clique, was the cause of their protraction, in the hope of endangering peace. A clever trick, of which the Abbé de la Ville was the instrument, sufficed to turn suspicion into mistrust, and to overthrow the powerful minister. The abbé was one of Choiseul's chief clerks, and entertained a grudge against him. The autocratic ways of the minister left no scope for the abilities and ambitions of the chief clerk, who, being a member of the Academy, prided himself on his style, and bore it ill that his chief neither concerned himself about the niceties of his style nor allowed him other than a mechanical share in the labours of the foreign office. The clique bethought itself of the ill-intentioned abbé as an important ally in this tricky business. On 21st December 1770, Louis summoned La Ville to his cabinet, and asked him how the negotiations were proceeding, and what Choiseul's real intentions were. The abbé could give no satisfactory reply to the question. Choiseul, said he, writes his important despatches himself, and keeps his own counsel. But, artfully added he, order me to write a letter to the King of Spain, absolutely enjoining his majesty to keep the peace. Show this letter to M. Choiseul, and if he makes no objection, then your majesty may depend on it, he is as eager as yourself for this consummation. Which done, Choiseul did as his crafty enemies desired, counselled delay till the answer to his last proposals of agreement should be received, and thus sealed his own doom.[1] On the 24th December, he received a curt note in the following terms:—"My cousin, the dissatisfaction I experience with your services obliges me to banish you to Chanteloup, where you will repair in twenty-four hours. I would have sent you much further if it had not been for the esteem I have for the Duchess de Choiseul, in whose welfare I am much interested. Be careful that your conduct does not force me to take some other step. I pray God, my cousin, to keep you in His holy protection."[2]

Public opinion turned the disgrace of the minister into a triumph As the patron of the Parliaments, the friend of the philosophers, th conqueror of Corsica, the enemy of Dubarri and her clique, th brilliant regenerator of France, Choiseul had claims on the respec of too large a section of the people of Paris to be ignored and hustle thus hastily off the stage. A large section of the court for onc recognised the merits of a fallen minister, and crowded to his hôte

[1] Besenval, i. 255-263. [2] Vie Privée, iv. 210.

to condole. The young Duke de Chartres, the future Philip Égalité, rushed thither to embrace him, and a cortege of sympathisers escorted him to his place of exile. Chanteloup threatened to become the rival of Versailles.[1] For six months France was without a foreign minister, the duties of the office being performed by St Florentin, now Duke de la Vrillière. Louis hesitated between the Count de Broglie and the Duke D'Aiguillon, and finished by preferring, in accordance with his distrust of real ability, the incapable man. Broglie was hot-tempered, obstinate, maladroit, but he had a high reputation in secret quarters for statesmanship. He had been one of Louis' secret agents for fifteen years. He showed, however, a facility for doing things in the wrong way at times, and on this occasion, in the words of Choiseul, took the ministry by the tail, instead of by the head.[2] D'Aiguillon was not the man to save Poland in the grave conjunction to which events had rapidly brought it in the interval. A partial partition had been resolved on, and the miserable diplomacy of Versailles had permitted Austria to be a party to it.[3] D'Aiguillon's policy was simply to shut his eyes and let events go as they would, while a handful of French, under the Marquis de Viomesnil, who had replaced Dumouriez, was allowed to help the confederates to take Cracow, and carry off Stanislaus from Warsaw. The Russians retook Cracow, delivered Stanislaus from his captors, and sent their French prisoners to Russia, D'Aiguillon looking on in impotent perplexity. He missed the chance of intervention offered by the doubts and distrust of the despoilers as to the policy of partition. Maria Theresa had still some scruples; Catherine would have preferred to leave Poland intact as a vassal kingdom of her own, or in return for concessions at the expense of Turkey. D'Aiguillon lost this chance by sending to Vienna a showy, but stupid ambassador in the person of the Prince de Rohan, instead of the Count de Broglie. Rohan allowed himself to be amused and hoodwinked by Kaunitz; and D'Aiguillon, to whom Frederick made overtures as it suited him as long as the terms of partition were in suspense, believed himself master of the situation. Frederick betrayed his confidences to Maria Theresa as circumstances rendered it advisable, and D'Aiguillon blundered from bad to worse in this fashion till the 5th of August, when the treaty of partition was signed between the three parties to the disgraceful bargain. D'Aiguillon's incapacity, Choiseul's "brilliance" left France to lament "a diplomatic defeat unparalleled

[1] See Meilhan, Melanges (app. to Mémoires de Mad. du Hausset), 180, 181; Vie Privée, iv. 211.

[2] Vie Privée, iv. 249; Bachaumont, 377.

[3] Broglie, ii. 323-325.

in its annals," says the historian.[1] Loud was the cry of indignation at this climax of the want of statesmanship to counterbalance the genius of Pitt, Frederick, Catherine. France was in the worst of ill-humours, and cursed from its heart the miserable *régime* of its besotted king, who could allow a great wrong to be perpetrated, when it was his palpable interest to prevent it, as if he were but the petty prince of some small German or Italian State.[2] "I have now seen the three great Powers," wrote a French diplomatic agent of the free lance sort (Dumouriez, of Polish expeditionary fame), to another, "who hold the balance of the destinies of Europe. As for us, we are dead. Let me know whether the name of Frenchman is an ornament where you are. I have had no chance of boasting of it as yet in the course of my travels."[3] "In boldness of criticism," remarks De Broglie, ". . . in this general feeling of the abasement of the country, and the weakness or unworthiness of those who governed it, the breath of the approaching revolution may be discerned."[4] As yet the Bastille was standing, however, and Dumouriez and some of his more outspoken friends, who already hear the roar of the approaching whirlwind, have the opportunity of prognoscing the future within its walls, where their talk may do no harm to M. D'Aiguillon and Madame Dubarri.

We must now turn from the cabinet to enter once more, though with reluctance, the *petits appartements* of Louis XV. 'Twere better to pass the door, were it not for the fact that in the seraglio of the monarch lay the chief element of the corruption and decline which were lowering and wasting France in its own eyes as well as in the sight of Europe. During the last decade of the reign, Louis XV. lost the remaining vestiges of the national respect which had survived the *régime* of Madame de Pompadour. In 1764, at the age of forty-two, the marquise dropped the burden of directing the State and amusing the king, which she had borne for twenty years. The strain of this double *rôle* had produced a heart affection, to which she succumbed thus early.[5] She was taken seriously ill during a pleasure trip to Choisy, whence she was removed to Versailles. The passion with which she had inspired the king was long extinct, but habit had maintained her ascendency as indispensable to a mind, so much the prey of vacuity. Madame was necessary as the purveyor of his pleasures and the directress of affairs, and she possessed the unscrupulous

[1] Broglie, ii. 352.

[2] See Favier, Considerations Raisonnées sur l'État de l'Europe, in Count de Segur's Politique des Cabinets de l'Europe.

[3] De Broglie, ii. 387, 388. [4] *Ibid.*, ii. 388. [5] Hausset, 149.

address which enabled her to fill both *rôles* with equal acceptability. A remarkable woman enough in her way—born to rule the kingdom which had the misfortune to have Louis XV. for its master. She was at least capable of sacrificing herself to her ambition, and that ambition revealed no ordinary strength of mind. To rise from the position of a bourgoisie beauty to that of uncrowned queen of a great State, and hold this position for twenty years against the tide of intrigue and envy, was no small achievement, and might merit recognition if one could forget the means by which she grasped and held the reigns of power. History, unhappily, can regard her in no other light than that of an adventuress of a bad type, whose personal character sullied the history of France, and whose political influence contributed to darken it with disaster. The same judgment would be passed on a woman of this type had she been of high lineage. It is not on genealogical, but on moral grounds that she stands condemned. The high-born ladies and gentlemen took offence at her extraction, and bewailed the degradation of the monarchy because the mistress was not one of their own kind. They would have found little or nothing to distress them in an adventuress of high aristocratic birth. We beg leave to differ from these fastidious critics in this particular, and to bewail the moral degradation of France without asking questions about the pedigree of the adventuress. France certainly had ample reason to greet her decease as a release from an unlovely and intolerable thraldrom, and though Louis paid her every attention in her last illness, and recognised her ascendency to the point of sending M. Janet daily with the despatches to her sick-bed,[1] her death left no void in his heart. When her body was carried away in a litter from Versailles, the apathetic monarch was observed curiously gazing down on the procession from a window of the palace.[2]

Death in these latter days was busy with the conscience of Louis XV. Within the space of eighteen months (November 1759–March 1761) Louis lost his favourite daughter and *confidante*, the Duchess of Parma, his grandson the Duke of Burgundy—another real grief—the Princess of Condé, and the Count of Charolais. In December 1765 the Dauphin was carried off by consumption at Compiègne. The father and son did not love each other, for the Dauphin was an austere devotee, and, by contrast, a reproach to his sensual sire. He was, too, the centre of the circle of malcontents, who on religious and party grounds stood in opposition to the court, and the hope of the longed-for reaction. From the window of his sick-room the dying

[1] Vie Privée, iv. 25. [2] *Ibid.*, iv. 26.

prince could see the preparations for the departure of the king, when death should end his sufferings, and commented on the fact in the significant words, "I must die, for I am troublesome to too many people." Voltaire, who could not be suspected of partiality for a prince who was the hope of the Church and the enemy of the free-thinkers, expressed the sentiment of the nation in the graceful couplet—

"Connu par ses vertus plus que par ses travaux,
Il sçut penser en sage et mourir en héros."

In the following February died the queen, the long-suffering Marie Lesczinski, and about a year later the Dauphiness followed her husband, in accordance with that singular facility, more than once exemplified in the Bourbon family, for dying in batches. While the public whispered poison as the usual explanation of such a series of accidents, Louis, with the fear of hell before his eyes, saw in these losses the admonition of Heaven. Mademoiselle Romans, who had borne him a child which he had allowed to be baptized under the name of Bourbon, made strenuous, but maladroit efforts to gain the vacant place of mistress. She was shut up in a convent for her pains, and her child taken from her and educated in a college, to appear in society, under Louis XVI., as the Abbé de Bourbon. Louis, it was inferred, had reconciled himself to the Church, had, in fact, been converted by the good offices of his daughter, the Princess Adelaide, and had become an exemplary father. He did not wear the mask long, and, while continuing his secret debaucheries,[1] soon undeceived the nation by perpetrating a scandal in excess even of any of his past enormities. The name of Dubarri is a still greater disgrace to Louis XV. than that of Pompadour. The successor of Madame de Pompadour was the daughter of a licentious monk and a kitchen maid.[2] Richelieu claims in his memoirs a considerable share of the credit of the elevation of this woman as sultana. The *valet de chambre*, Lebel, who was incessantly on the quest for new objects to reanimate the jaded passions of his master, was not very nice in his selection. Louis was not particular; nay, variety was welcome, and Lebel took care to draw his victims from the lower as well as the higher strata of society. Tradesmen's wives and daughters, peasant girls found their way into the harem through the medium of Lebel and his secret agents, to be instructed in the principles of the Gospel and then debauched by the superstitious voluptuary, who mingled the forms of religion with his excesses. Latterly the infamous den known

[1] Vie Privée, iv. 162, 163.

[2] Besenval, i. 360.

as the Parc aux Cerfs had been shut up. But the *petits cabinets* still subsisted, and the secret orgies only increased in the revolting excesses of senile lewdness as the monarch grew older.[1] Lebel's relations with the scoundrelism of Paris enabled him to present one "morsel" after another, and thus defeat the fear of death and hell, and thwart the tactics of the devotees. One day he received a visit from a sponger of the name of Dubarri, who haunted the social purlieus of the capital, and among other devices for making a living, worthy of a broken aristocrat, hired out to his wealthy acquaintances his mistress, a girl of the name of L'Ange, offspring of the aforesaid clerical and culinary cohabitation. Dubarri had often waited on business of this kind on the *valet de chambre*, and the valet, who listened to his exaggerated laudations of the new beauty with considerable scepticism, consented at last to grant her the favour of an inspection. He was captivated by the figure, the eyes, the arts of the candidate. The reflection that the woman was a common prostitute, whose person had been at the service of the basest characters, was embarrassing, but, in the moral atmosphere breathed by the valet, even this objection was got over. The valet agreed to put her in the way of being seen by his master, who, however, did not notice her presence. A second trial was more effective. The lewd monarch was riveted, and erelong the plaything of *roués* of the stamp of Dubarri occupied the place of Madame de Pompadour. Unlike her predecessor, the new favourite made no attempt to retain her conquest by deferential miens. She carried into the royal chamber the manners of the brothel, mingling familiarity, effrontery, vulgarity with her lewd arts. The sensual old fool of a monarch was so charmed by the oddity, so intoxicated by the unrestrained vivacity, the blandishments, the beauty of the siren that he would have her presented in spite of all remonstrances. Lebel, even Lebel, remonstrated, persistently remonstrated, and got a colic for his pains, of which he died, and time to him. Choiseul remonstrated, and being persistent too, was told to mind the affairs of his offices, and leave his majesty to dispose of those of his heart. The royal family and the *dévots* expostulated angrily on behalf of common decency and domestic rights, likewise to no purpose. Mdlle. L'Ange was married *pro forma* to a needy nobody of a brother of Count Dubarri, was then entitled, as a woman of quality, to the "honour" of a presentation, and was sedulously trained for her *début* by Dubarri's sister. A poor creature of a needy countess was bribed to present her, and presented she accordingly was. "This day," concludes the author of Richelieu's

[1] See Méms. de Richelieu, ii. 246, 247.

memoirs, "was the declared triumph of libertinage, and from this moment the king lost the little esteem of which he had been the object."[1] From the same writer we learn, too, the incredible depth of immorality, sycophancy, and shameless egoism which turned the courtiers, and even the ministers, into the mere puppets of this abandoned woman. Choiseul was an exception, not so much owing to moral scruples, for Choiseul had bowed the knee to Madame de Pompadour, and been guilty of unworthy intrigues to ingratiate himself into her favour. But Choiseul's sister, the Duchess de Grammont, a proud, intriguing woman, had raised her eyes to the place of the deceased sultana, and had been disappointed by a girl of the street. The minister's hauteur would not condescend to unbend after this. He was, moreover, in his own opinion, so firmly rooted in power, so necessary to save Louis the exertions of governing, that he could afford to ignore and treat the advances of the favourite with contempt. He was soon to discover his mistake, for in Dubarri all the minister's enemies and former rivals, all the malcontents that haunt a court, found a rallying point, and their united and venomous attacks at last succeeded, at an otherwise opportune moment, in hustling him into disgrace. Apart from Choiseul, who held himself haughtily aloof in the plenitude of his power, the ministers, court officials, society leaders, hungry hangers-on by the hundred waved the censer at the feet of the new divinity. The new divinity was not the political successor of Madame de Pompadour. She interfered little in affairs of State, except to discredit her enemies by buffoonery. Louis amused himself by making his coffee in her apartments, and laughing at her familiar sallies. Sometimes this buffoonery had a political bearing. One day, for instance, Madame took two oranges, and, tossing them alternately, kept on repeating, "Up with you, Choiseul; up with you, Praslin," to the huge delight of her sottish guest. Though not politically powerful, she was the presiding goddess of society, and was worshipped by the courtier crowd[2] with an almost incredible amount of servility. Nothing emphasises better the decline of common manliness, the absence of true womanhood, in this glib-tongued, witty, depraved society than the prostration of self-respect at the feet of a royal cuckold and his vulgar minion. Is Marshal Richelieu impatient of Choiseul's autocracy? He must needs whisper laudations of the Countess Dubarri in the ear of the monarch, and strike at his enemy and former rival from beneath her mantle. Does he wish a seat in the council? Madame Dubarri is the channel through which he tries to work his way thither. Does the Prince of

[1] See Méms. de Richelieu, ii. 260.

[2] *Ibid.*, ii. 260.

Condé want to woo the royal favour? He sits near the favourite at the play, applauds enthusiastically every phrase that the sycophant poet has composed in her honour, and is ravished with the slight gesture of satisfaction with which her pretty hand rewards his grovelling officiousness.[1] The princes and the marshals were outdone by the Duke of Tresmes, who called into activity his very deformity, in order to render the ruling beauty propitious. The duke, if gossip speaks truly, not finding the sultana at home one day, wrote upon the door, "The marmouset of the Countess Dubarri is come to pay his homage to her, and to make her laugh."[2] Man in general, it is to be hoped, was not descended from the ape, but courtiers of the stamp of the latter days of the reign of Louis XV. evidently were. This servility infected even high dignitaries of the Church. The papal nuncio and the Grand Almoner are found reaching Madame her slippers at her morning toilet. And yet this crawling debasement need not astonish us. What, after all, can be looked for in a society whose grand concern is mainly etiquette, precedence, pensions—a society which for several weeks is absorbed in the mighty debate whether Mdlle. Lorraine should dance after the princesses of the blood and before the great nobility.[3] How different the attitude of the people, in whom, if we may not look for polish, we may find some sense of the fitness of things, when that sense has been polished out of the souls of courtiers. When Louis went to open the Pont de Neuilly, only the workmen and the soldiers cried "Vive le roi." The effect of this silence on the spectator who describes the scene was, he says, very strange. No wonder—Louis was accompanied by Madame Dubarri; and in order that she might not be outshone, his daughters were not allowed to take part in the ceremony.[4]

Dubarri, like Pompadour, was a costly plaything. Her extravagance was boundless, and, like the vulgar *parvenu*, she sought to make up for true refinement by costly ostentation. Louis' infatuation glutted itself in costly presents. The public treasury was pillaged by the inveterate cupidity of the favourite and her minions. Fêtes and pleasure trips were multiplied for her gratification. If death had not intervened, assures a contemporary, she would have swallowed up the kingdom.[5] Yet with the resources of a kingdom to minister to his vices, the sated voluptuary could not escape the *ennui* of an exhausted constitution, a vacant mind, and the ever-recurring intervals of remorse, disgust, and superstitious fears. To counteract these Dubarri

[1] Richelieu, ii. 270.
[2] Vie Privée, iv. 273.
[3] Richelieu, ii. 265.
[4] Bachaumont, 370, 371; Vie Privée, iv. 274.
[5] Vie Privée, iv. 275.

adopted the tactics of Pompadour, and became the accomplice as well as the object of his sensual excesses.[1] The sudden death of several of the partners of his orgies struck terror into the craven monarch. His daughter, Madame Louise, succeeded at times in probing his conscience. The Bishop of Senez boldly rebuked him from the pulpit, and drew the moving picture of an oppressed people whose affection he had forfeited. The Abbé de Beauvais with greater boldness predicted the inevitable collapse. "Still forty days, sire," cried he from the pulpit, "and Nineveh shall be destroyed." The mistress and her creatures trembled at times, and redoubled their efforts to maintain the empire of the senses. They improvised a trip to Trianon[2] with orgies of a piquant character, and this trip was destined to put an end to Louis' unworthy career. Nemesis at last found out even a king, who for forty years had set at defiance the laws of nature and morality. A peasant girl—the last victim of his lust—communicated the germ of a terrible disease—the small-pox. The first surgeon directed his immediate return to Versailles (April 1774). A shameful malady complicated the case. Though the putrid blood of the patient left little hope of recovery, the sultana and her minions did their utmost to soothe the disquietude of the patient and banish the fear of hell. D'Aiguillon and Richelieu carefully shut the door of the sick chamber against every ill-intentioned person who might speak the truth, and hoped thereby to shut out remorse and even death itself. At their instigation the physicians declared it dangerous to propose to the king the reception of the last sacraments, and succeeded in preventing the Archbishop of Paris from broaching the subject. The terror of the sick man at length defeated their tactics. When Madame Dubarri approached the sick-bed on the 4th May, "Madame," said the king, "I am very ill. I know what I must do. I do not wish to repeat the scene of Metz. Go to Ruel, to the house of M. D'Aiguillon, and be assured I shall always cherish for you the most tender friendship." The sultana left the room in great perturbation, and retired to Ruel. Even yet Louis seemed to compromise matters with his conscience, for Ruel was only two leagues distant, and the separation did not promise to be a final one. The parasite crowd of courtiers held their breath in suspense, at one moment hooting the relatives of Dubarri away from Versailles, the next streaming in procession to Ruel. The suspense lasted while the shrine of St Geneviève was opened, but the saint was not to be propitiated, and Louis, abandoning hope, confessed himself in time to receive the sacraments at the hands of the Grand Almoner, with such declarations of

[1] Richelieu, ii. 271. [2] See Bachaumont, 384.

repentance as seemed compatible with the dignity of an absolute potentate. "Although the king be accountable to none but God for his conduct," said the Grand Almoner to those present, "he is sorry to have given occasion for scandal to his subjects, and declares that he will hereafter live only for the maintenance of religion, and for the happiness of his people." He had left himself scant time for the exercise of his self-sacrificing resolution, but the fear of hell kept the Abbé Moudon trotting out and in to hear his confession several times over. His body became a mass of corruption, and he died forsaken by all but his daughters and a few officials who braved the pestilential air of the sick-room to the last (10th May). His death was the signal for a stampede from Versailles as if from an inferno, for Louis suffered and died amid the most complete indifference, nay, amid signs of impatience at death's dilatoriness, which the court took no pains to conceal. "You weep for your master," said the Duke of Liancourt to a *valet de garde robe* whom he found in tears. "Not at all," replied the valet quite loudly, "I am weeping for my poor comrade, who has never had the small-pox, and who will certainly catch it and die."[1] The only dignitaries who remained were the Duke of Ayen, the captain of the Scottish Guard, the Duke of Aumont, first gentleman of the bedchamber, the Grand Almoner, and the grand master of ceremonies. The putrid remains, enclosed in two leaden coffins in order to prevent as far as possible the deadly infection, were carried within forty-eight hours at a brisk trot to St Denis in a common hunting carriage, followed by the above-mentioned officials in a couple of coaches, and a number of pages and a bodyguard on horseback, and greeted by the sarcasms and jibes of the crowd along the route. "Louis XV.," says Besenval, an eye-witness, "had rendered himself the object of an almost general hatred. I was a member of the guard at the time of his death, and had the curiosity to mix among the people who filled the courts on this occasion. The French, naturally gay and frivolous, and good-natured, do not display the emotions which agitate them by means of those coarse and ferocious traits which one remarks in other peoples. Moreover, the inhabitants of Versailles are influenced by the sojourn of the court, and have contracted a certain self-restraint and policy. I heard no remark, but it was easy to see the satisfaction expressed by every face."[2] Outside Versailles this satisfaction was not moderated by the habit of deference for the court. The churches to which the people were summoned to pray were empty, in melancholy contrast to the touching scenes which signalised the illness of

[1] Besenval, i. 306. [2] Mémoires, i. 307.

1744. On that occasion eighteen hundred masses were offered for the recovery of the Bien Aimé. In 1757 the number had decreased to a few hundred. In 1774 only four were said. These numbers measure the descent from universal adoration to universal detestation. This detestation was voiced in placards, couplets, epitaphs.[1] As the funeral cortege was passing a tavern at St Denis, the landlord, in the hope of getting a party of revellers to leave the premises, announced its approach. "What," said one of them, "the rascal has starved us in his lifetime, and shall he now destroy us with thirst at his death?"[2] The *bon-mot* of the Abbé Geneviève was still more pointed. On being bantered by some young friends as to the insufficiency of the prayers to the saint, "Well, gentlemen," was the response, "what is there to complain of? Is he not dead?"[3]

Henry IV. and Louis XIV. had both outraged morality by their excesses, but both exhibited marked character as rulers. While Henry's good government and personal attractiveness made him the most popular of kings, and Louis XIV. never ceased to impose even the last dark years of his reign, Louis XV. had long forfeited all claim to respect, whether as monarch or as individual. Sagacity and good sense he must be admitted to have possessed to a certain extent, and there are not wanting instances in which he evinced correctness of judgment in political matters.[4] Indolent, apathetic men often hit on the truth where more intense natures may see things in the light of their own passions. Louis judged correctly at times because he was constitutionally incapable of bias or excess of interest. In the conversation of the time he appears as "the master." The title was a complete misnomer. During the latter part of his reign, at least, the nullity of the monarch was proverbial. He was aware of the corruption, the extortion practised by his servants, yet he was incapable of the volition necessary to reform it. On one occasion, while driving to the chase with Choiseul, Louis asked his companion how much he thought the carriage had cost him. "Perhaps eight thousand francs," replied the duke. "You are greatly out," said the king, "it cost thirty thousand." Marshal Noailles being present, Choiseul said nothing, but some days later, during an interview in the royal cabinet, he took the opportunity to remonstrate against the shameless corruption and extortion rampant in connection with the expenses of the household. If the king would support him, he would put a stop to such intolerable abuses. "My dear friend," replied the king, "the defalcations in my household are indeed enormous, but

[1] Besenval, i. 308.
[2] Bachaumont, 383.
[3] Bachaumont, 387.
[4] See, for instance, King's Secret, ii. 205.

it is impossible to put an end to them. Too many people of influence are interested in these robberies to hope for remedy. All my ministers have formed plans for controlling the expenditure, but they soon abandoned them in despair. Cardinal Fleury was a powerful minister. He was practically master of France. He died without daring to execute any of his projects relative to this subject. So believe me, calm yourself, and let alone an incurable vice."[1] His ministers practised on his weakness with astonishing *sang froid*. The facility with which they ignored his wishes is as remarkable as the subordination and servility which he knew how to impose in official circles. "The king," we read in Richelieu's Memoirs, "was but a sort of phantom. Each minister was more king than he. No one was ignorant of the fact, and this conviction was so strong, it was graven so deeply in the mind of the whole court, that it was said that if these gentlemen should undertake to make the king sign his own dethronement, they would succeed."[2] Only very rarely did he show the slightest capacity for taking an independent resolution, as when Richelieu presented a petition for the restitution of his friend Marshal Maillebois at court, and Louis curtly wrote on it the word "Refused."[3] Here is a significant incident which is only one among many. An army surgeon, named Boiscaillau, petitioned the monarch directly for the payment of a certain sum owing him, which he had been unable to obtain. Louis acceded, and wrote on the petition an order to the controller-general to pay forthwith. On presenting the paper, Abbé Terrai looked at the surgeon and threw it at him with a gesture of impatience. "But, monseigneur, when shall I receive payment?" "Never," was the curt answer. "But the *bon* of the king." "It is not mine." "But his majesty—" "Let him pay you, since you have addressed your request to him. Off with you; I have no time to be pestered further." The poor surgeon applied to Richelieu's secretary, who, being new to the business, remonstrated to his master against the abbé's insolence. "You are a big imbecile," returned the marshal, "not to know that the worst patronage of all is that of the king. Since the abbé has spoken, tell Boiscaillau that he shall have nothing, and don't you meddle with such affairs in future."[4] In the matter of granting pensions, even Louis was reduced to the *rôle* of the cypher. One evening at Choisy, on leaving the play in which Armand, the celebrated comic actor, had succeeded with his usual irresistibility in dispelling the *ennui* of the monarch, "Armand," said the king, "I give you a pension of one hundred pistoles." After a

[1] Besenval, i. 425, 426.
[2] Richelieu, ii. 271.
[3] Richelieu, ii. 272.
[4] *Ibid.*, ii. 273, 274.

time Armand presented his claim. "You are a sneak," cried M. the first gentleman of the chamber; "know that it is I alone who had the right to give you a pension, and that what the king said to you is worth nothing whatsoever. Do not continue your importunities. You shall have nothing."[1]

The man who was so impotent to control his own ministers, and even their first clerks, was not the man to eradicate the abuses that were consuming a kingdom. "What can I do?" said he to Richelieu during a conversation on the embarrassments of the situation; "when they commit blunders they will not listen to me. After all, it is their fault and not mine. They do what they like; it is no affair of mine." It is evidently very far gone with the monarchy by divine right, when the real kings are a set of mediocre, corrupt, and insolent officials. The king has virtually abdicated his functions, retaining the outward semblance of them merely through habit and jealousy of his successor. So little real authority resides in this phantom of an absolute king, in spite of complicated ceremonies of a deferential etiquette, that his very valets did not receive their pay and had to steal or beg. "Are there many rich or poor among your flock?" asked Louis of the priest of St Louis of Versailles. "Very many poor, sire," was the reply. "But are not the alms plentiful? Are they not sufficient? Is the number of unfortunate people increased?" "Alas, yes, sire." "How so," asked Louis, "what is the reason?" "The reason is that even the footmen of your palace ask charity of me." "I believe you," was the indignant response as he turned on his heel, "they won't pay them."

In such a nature there could not be the sensibility requisite to direct the will. He might sigh at the sight of hungry crowds surrounding his carriage and calling for bread, but his transient sympathy was not equal to the task of breaking through the indolent system of letting things go as they would.[2] The only sentiment that took a real grip of him at times was the fear of death and hell, and even this feeling was not strong enough to master the promptings of sensuality. His incapacity for an effort of volition which would involve self-sacrifice led him to risk even the doom which he most dreaded. His religiosity was intended to preserve him from the clutches of the devil, and in this sense Louis was a religious man who occasionally talked theology with priests and devotees in a most edifying fashion. The lewd *habitué* of the Parc aux Cerfs showed himself, for example, a harsh bigot towards the Protestants.[3] The man who gave the

[1] Richelieu, ii. 274.
[2] Vie Privée, iv. 160, 161.
[3] Richelieu, ii. 282.

utmost scope to his animal nature refused to give liberty of worship to the best of his subjects for fear of the divine displeasure. His religion was, in fact, that of the crassest monk of mediæval times. "The king," says Choiseul, "was instructed in his religion like a nun of St Mary. No one could listen to him without disgust, and (a thing that is inconceivable, a thing I should not believe had he not told it me himself) he resolved to form an alliance with the House of Austria with a view to the annihilation of Protestantism after the ruin of the King of Prussia." [1]

Under the guise of this religiosity, which it was hoped would serve as a talisman against the devil, the most revolting vice crowded the court. The details of it cannot be translated into decent English, and the fact that it could be chronicled so minutely in the memoirs of the time, without apparent offence, speaks for itself as to the depravity of the relations of the sexes under Louis XV. Art and literature were infected by it, and the refined civilisation, the elegance, the perfection of manners, the luxury and extravagance are but the veneer of a moral corruption which bids fair to lead to the destruction of the social and political order, whose core is full of rottenness.

SOURCES OF THIS CHAPTER.—Meilhan, Mélanges d'Histoire et de Littérature; Vie Privée; Broglie, King's Secret; Mémoires de Besenval; Favier, Considerations Raisonnés sur l'État de l'Europe; Bachaumont Mémoires; Du Hausset, Mémoires; Duc de Richelieu, Mémoires; MSS. of the Duc de Choiseul, in St Priest, Fall of the Jesuits.

[1] MSS. of the Duke of Choiseul, quoted by St Priest, Fall of the Jesuits, 28, 29.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

### Conclusion.

To conclude. One fact is evident. Louis XV. has brought France to the brink of revolution. He has discredited the monarchy in its present form almost beyond hope of recovery. Only a successor of the stamp of a Henry IV. could have saved the situation by restoring popularity to the throne, and sweeping away the varied accumulation of abuse. Only a Henry IV., with his popular sympathies and his indomitable will, could have successfully infused new vitality into the crapulous veins of the monarchy, and obviated the ominous effects of universal discontent and depression. Had a Turgot had a Henry IV. instead of a Louis XVI. as master, reform might still have stemmed the tide of revolution. Louis XVI. had both the sense and the will to reform. He had not the strength of character to fight down the reaction which the reforming policy of Turgot conjured, and with the failure of Turgot's spasmodic efforts to reform, there was no alternative but the fatal policy of drift onwards to the surging sea of revolution.

But it is with the past rather than the future that I must conclude. The long period we have traversed is certainly ample enough to test the merits of any system of government. We have seen the monarchy advancing step by step out of the Middle Ages towards the absolute sway of modern times, repressing the feudal magnate, curbing the feudal prelate, bearding even the Pope. The monarchy met with checks in its progress towards absolute mastery, for mediæval history presents us with a strange alternation of weak and strong kings during the period of the direct line of Capet, and of that of the Valois too. There were occasional reactions in times of crisis, as I have noted in the preface, and exemplified in the course of the work. During the regency of Charles V., to go no further back, in the reign of Charles VI., at the accessions of Louis XI. and Charles VIII., in the latter part of the reign of Henry III., and the beginning of that of Louis XIII., during the minority of Louis XIV., there were reactionary efforts, feudal or democratic, or both combined, to

vindicate old rights, or enforce new ones against the Crown. These efforts failed, and the Crown succeeded in asserting its position, and even in strengthening it until absolute kingly government burst into its full resplendence under Louis XIV. Its unlimited supremacy was indubitable. Nevertheless it cannot be said to have rested on a solid basis. These frequent outbursts of reaction, whenever the rein of authority slackened, betoken a chronic dissatisfaction with the dominant system. They show that there must have been something wrong with that system. Though feudal factiousness may to some extent account for this dissatisfaction, part of it, at least, sprang from the consciousness of oppression, from the hatred of misgovernment, hard to bear, of a thraldom which conflicts with the aspirations after political rights innate in every true man. Ever and anon the consciousness of human worth, even in the humble man, glimmers forth amid the miseries of years of gloom, in the appeal for justice, in the craving for happiness, in the striving for something better than the present, in the demand for the recognition of what is due to a fellow mortal made, equally with kings, in the image of God. That there was something wrong in the body politic we have learned amply enough from the chronicles, and from the still more incontestable evidence of the statute-book and the records of administration. It is only fair to remember that, as I have shown from the same sources, all was not wrong, and that the shadow of misgovernment was relieved at times by the sunshine of good government. The monarchy served a great purpose in French history, and it was because it was indispensable that it survived each successive effort to weaken it, survived long enough to degenerate and outlive its true function. It was a mighty factor in the making of the French nation. It fulfilled a great vocation in unifying it. It brought order into the chaos of feudal anarchy. It was a powerful patron of the weak against the strong. It served to inspire the idea of nationality; it quickened patriotism; it was the minister of justice. There were, too, admirable rulers among these French monarchs, great administrators, sage statesmen, friends of the people, workers on the side of progress. The names of Louis IX., Charles V., Louis XII., Henry IV. do credit to the French monarchy. Nevertheless, in view of these oft-recurring fits of distemper in the body politic, the condition of the nation under the system of absolute kingly government cannot be called a satisfactory one. However much the good rulers accomplished for the benefit of France, it was largely nullified, too largely, by the bad rulers. Moreover, the reforms of one age may become the abuses of another, and at any rate, a system which, while

it might occasionally produce good results in a Louis XII. or a Henry IV., so often left France at the mercy of an incapable ruler, could not be a final form of government. So long as a Louis IX. or a Charles V. could not perpetuate himself in his successor, the system of one-man rule was bound to be the frequent failure it proved to be. Moreover, it was not favourable to the political development of the people, it did not tend to train the people to govern itself, and thus prevented the nation from making good the incapacity of its ruler, and sacrificed the people all too often to its own incompetence and egotism.

If this long period of fitful growth should be followed by a period of steady decline, it is evident that the system had reached the stage of dissolution. During this period of decline, which extended over the hundred years preceding the death of Louis XV., the monarchy resembled an emaciated body, which had withstood many attacks and had no strength left to withstand the final assault. It had had periodic warnings, as some acute disorder—a League du Bien Publique, a Fronde, a defiant Parliament, a popular insurrection—threw the body politic into a violent fever. The fever had subsided, but it had left its traces in the loss of strength which a transient access of robustness had not entirely eradicated. And now in the eighteenth century, when the climax of decline and incompetence is reached in the person of Louis XV., the prospect of resistance and recuperation seems hopeless. The attack, it is evident, will be something more serious than the onslaught of a League du Bien Publique, a Fronde, or a spasmodic insurrection. The monarchy will have to reckon with the revolutionary mood of a whole people. In previous crises there had not been a conscious or concerted impulse towards revolution, and, in this sense, we cannot of course link the French Revolution to a Fronde, or a League du Bien Publique. These movements had been the outcome of a desire for certain improvements in certain classes, not always enlightened or disinterested in their demands. Now, however, the word "Revolution" has become the motto of the nation. The revolutionary impulse has taken hold of the popular consciousness, and the throne is exposed to a surging tide of hostility that bids fair to sweep it away.

It is very ominous that in the face of this state of acute crisis there is nothing between the throne and the cataclysm. The king has neglected to educate the people in the exercise of political functions, as the Church has neglected its mental and spiritual enlightenment. Public opinion has become active in spite of the

throne and the Church, and it is hostile to both. The long repression of political and intellectual freedom has produced the inevitable rebound, when political and intellectual freedom see in the monarchy and the Church only the enemy to be attacked and demolished. The monarch cannot appeal to an enlightened political experience to come to the rescue. The monarchy has sacrificed the political education of the nation to its own egotism, and what political life there is in the nation is now overwhelmingly reactionary and hostile. The coming upheaval will therefore be a terrible explosion of long pent up suffering and passion, without the element of political experience and wisdom to counteract its effects. Reform, cry the advocates of good government, the enlightened publicists, as they have cried so often in vain from Bodin to Montesquieu. The cry is now more vain than ever. The remedy that now suggests itself to the nation is not reform, but revolution. Montesquieu read contemporary French history more correctly than Burke, the English apologist of the French monarchy, when he wrote: "All that I have ever encountered in history of the symptoms that presage great revolutions exists, and is increasing from day to day in France."[1] D'Argenson, as I have shown, is an emphatic witness to the same effect. Fénélon at an earlier period, Rousseau and Voltaire at a later, may be cited as additional witnesses. The government is the universal enemy. It has made itself impossible; it has also made reform in any other form than revolution next to impossible. To say with Burke that there was nothing in the situation of France to incite or warrant revolution is to misread French history. If I might hazard a definition of the French Revolution in a single sentence, I should say that it was a reaction against misgovernment, the misgovernment of a long series of absolute kings. That this misgovernment is a fact of most grave consequence to the stability of the monarchy in this eighteenth century, the foregoing chapters have, I think, abundantly demonstrated.

[1] See Letters of 13th April 1752 and 25th December 1753.

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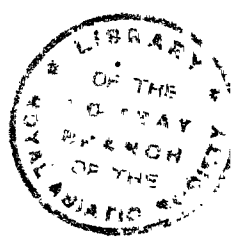

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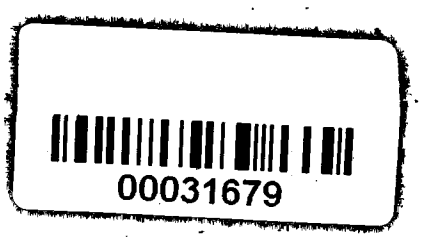


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